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|---|--------------------------------------|
| Arsenic                                   | Dibenz(a, h)acridine +               |
| Benzo(a)pyrene ++++                       | Dibenzo(a, h)pyrene ++               |
| Benzo(e)pyrene +                          | 9,10-Dimethylbenzo(a)anthracene ++++ |
| Benzo(c)pyrene +                          | Diethylene glycol                    |
| Benzo(a)anthracene +                      | a-Dimethylchrysene                   |
| Benzo(k)fluoranthene +                    | Dibenzo(a, l)pyrene                  |
| Benzo(b)fluoranthene ++                   | Dibenzo(a, i)pyrene                  |
| Benzene                                   | Ethyl alcohol                        |
| p-Benzoquinone                            | Fructose                             |
| n-Butyric acid                            | Glucose                              |
| Benzo(g, h, i)perylene +                  | Lactic acid                          |
| Chrysene +                                | 3-Methyl-1, 2-benzanthracene +       |
| Chromium                                  | 2-Methyl-3, 4-benzphenanthrene       |
| Cobalt                                    | Nickel                               |
| 5, 6-Cyclopenteno-<br>1, 2-benzanthracene | 2-Naphthol                           |
| 6, 7-Cyclopenteno-<br>1, 2-benzanthracene | Oleic acid                           |
| Dibenz(a, h)anthracene +++                | l-Proline                            |
| Dibenz(a, j)acridine ++                   | Pyrrrole                             |
| 7H-Dibenzo(c, g)carbazole ++              | Xylene                               |
|   | Indeno [1, 2, 3-cd]pyrene            |
|   | 3-Methylpyrene                       |

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**THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW. IMAGINE WHAT WE DON'T.**

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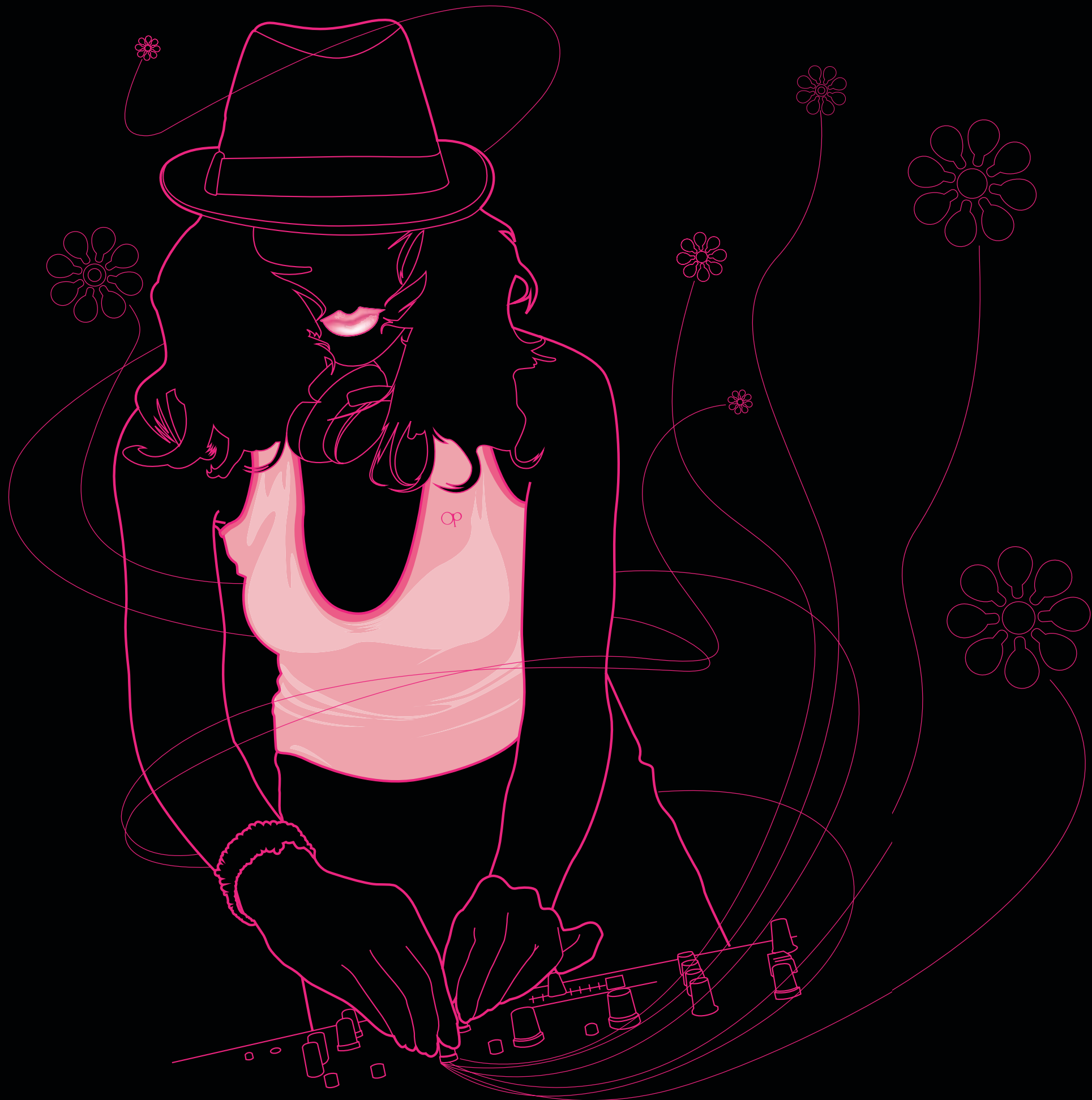




DISRUPT







dj alicia





GO FORTH AND SYNTH SOME MORE: THE ARP 2600  
IMAGE ZEN SEKIZAWA



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## ED'S RANT



Kareem Black

Wunmi flexes against the new world disorder.

### ART WAR ON THE HOMEFRONT

We're releasing this issue in the summer of 2003. But rather than a summer of love, or even a summer of luke-warm affection, I feel this will be a summer of discontent. Another summer for music during which—despite new rock's shiny confidence, dance music's smug reflection on its first decade-and-a-half of existence and commercial rap's hang-over after four years of drunken excess—no-one will feel safe, settled or inspired. It'll be a summer of reactions. Why?

Because now that the "war" is "over," we find a lot of question marks floating over our collective heads. Why did the American and British war in Iraq have to happen? What did it really accomplish? How can we justify and compensate for the civilian loss of life? It's as if we've emerged after a long and tense movie from the dark, comfortable cinema enclosure out into harsh streetlights, noise and traffic, senses still struggling to adjust. But when the war movie is reality, and the blockbuster literally demolishes neighborhoods with 2000-pound bombs, reaction-times to the scenes of intense misery, piles of corpses and the lingering emotional and political radiation can be rough.

Nowhere near as rough as the type of hunger, pain and hardship being endured in Iraq, Afghanistan and other spots in the Middle East. There and elsewhere, American policies directly or indirectly impose strictures on the lives of those caught up in North America's resource consumption. But it's obvious that when the world suffers, Americans choke on the gag-cloth of stifled speech—the marches and rallies, protests and boycotts, slogans and articles that could do nothing to stop the tanks and F-15s.

For me, it's not a matter of pointing fingers at villains or enforcing some limp attempt at accountability on the CEOs, politicians and military who wage continual war to consolidate wealth and resources. The answer lies in art and our ability to use it as a tool, a device, a proclamation and a vector to change institutions and modes of thinking. As resources are depleted, the next wars will be for ideas, brainpower, intellectual property and artistic concepts. The US Army may have figured out how to build "sound cannons" for crowd control and use ultra-low and -high frequencies to wage battle, but it'll be decades before they catch up to the raw concepts being pumped out daily by electronic music producers on CD, vinyl and MP3. This may sound like a daft premise from an obviously music-centric armchair intellectual, but no one can say what will be the next "Strange Fruit," *Slaughterhouse Five* or "Guernica," or what their impact on world leaders will be.

What is certain is that this summer will see agitation in all areas of the arts, media, economy and global politics that no amount of Hatha yoga will calm—a prelude to a certain and planned Cold War On Terror. The question is: what Berlin Wall will artists tear down next? What songs will be written to shake the national consciousness or even the nation's ass? What digital documentary, photo or graf'd wall-bomb will stop a warlord in his tracks?

Toward this effort we celebrate this issue with a German jazz group that works with Nigerian and British singers, a Brooklyn indie-electronic rocker who spreads the gospel of obscure Icelandic artists, and a Greek-American who turns patriotic cartoons on their own superpower swords. This is part of an art-war being fought on all global fronts simultaneously. The results could change history. We're living this culture with that aim in mind.

-Tomas, Editor



TRÜBY TRIO - ELEVATOR MUSIC - AFTER THEIR INTERNATIONAL DANCE HIT „A GO GO“, MANY GREAT REMIXES (E.G. FOR BEBEL GILBERTO, NINA SIMONE, PEACE ORCHESTRA AND OTHERS) AND THE DJ-KICKS COMPILATION, THE TRÜBY TRIO FINALLY PRESENTS THEIR DEBUT ALBUM „ELEVATOR MUSIC“ FEAT. JOSEPH MALIK, MARCUS BEGG, WURM, CONCHA BLIKA AND MORE - CPT 140-1 (3LP) & CPT 140-2 (CD)



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### STAFF BOX 06.03

#### STAFF

**EDITOR IN CHIEF** Andrew Smith (andrew@xlr8r.com)  
**EDITOR** Tomas A. Palermo (tomas@xlr8r.com)  
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR** Vivian Host (vivian@xlr8r.com)  
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR/REVIEWS EDITOR** Ron Nachmann (nachmann@xlr8r.com)  
**SENIOR WRITER** Toph One (redwine@xlr8r.com)  
**EDITORIAL INTERNS** Julie Bates, Julia Chan, Cameron Macdonald

**STAFF WRITERS** Eric K. Arnold, Pete Babb, Mike Battaglia, Susanna Bolle, Justi Echeles, Matt Fisher, James Friedman, Rob Geary, Alexis Georgopoulos, Steve Goodman, Mike Gwertzman, Heath K. Hignight, Christine Hsieh, Selena Hsu, Gerald "Gik" Kelleher, Anna Klaffer, J. David Marston, Luke Magnuson, Kathleen Maloney, Mark McNeill, Stacey Meyn, Chris Muniz, Margaret Murray, Steve Nickolls, Chris Orr, Brion Paul, Brock Phillips, Tim Pratt, Joe Rice, Philip Sherburne, Speed Demon, Dave Steifox, Paul Sullivan, Tony Ware, Jon Weldon  
**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS** Anna Chapman, Liz Cordingley, Sara Jayne Crow, Dmatrix, Matt Eberhart, Doug Eisengrein, Jon Freer, Fitz Gitler, Forest Green, Tim Haslett, David Hemingway, Ross Hogg, Lynne D. Johnson, Andrew Jones, June Joseph, Timo Kangas, Steve McLay, Cokni O'Dire, Tamara Palmer, Dave Segal, Praxis, Dan Sicko, Dave Stenton, Rachel Swan, Jesse Terry, Scott Thill, Martin Turenne, Brolin Winning, Curtis Zack

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR/STYLE AND CULTURE EDITOR** David Weissberg (david@xlr8r.com)  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER** Brianna Sagstad (brianna@xlr8r.com)  
**REVIEWS LAYOUT** Noah Sherburn  
**PRODUCTION/WEB INTERN** Elizabeth Yeung  
**STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS** David Axelbank, Kareem Black, Marcus Clackson, Jessica Miller, Michael Schmelling, Zen Sekizawa, Christopher Woodcock  
**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS** Jay Blakesberg, Doug Coombe, Chris Eichenseer, Foley, Maya Hayuk, Jim Newberry, Patricia Niven, Naomi O'Connell, Tom Oldham, Brion Paul, James Stair, Paul Sullivan  
**STAFF ILLUSTRATORS** Abigail's Party (abigails\_party23@hotmail.com), Nago Richardis (Nonconceptual)  
**CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS** Kozyndan

**PUBLISHER** Andrew Smith (andrew@amalgam.us)  
**CO-PUBLISHER** Arias Hung (arias@xlr8r.com)  
**OPERATIONS/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT** Michael Prommer (michael@amalgam.us)  
**DISTRIBUTION/MARKETING MANAGER** Emily Griffin (emily@amalgam.us)  
**ADVERTISING DIRECTOR/EAST COAST SALES** Melanie Samarasinghe (melanie@amalgam.us)  
**WEST COAST ADVERTISING SALES** Sue Kim (sue@amalgam.us)  
**ACCOUNTING MANAGER** Jamie Kochan (jamie@amalgam.us)  
**SUBSCRIPTIONS/DIRECT SALES** Jesse Terry (jesse@xlr8r.com)  
**MARKETING INTERN** Jialin Luh

**ADVERTISING:** Dial 415.861.7583, fax 415. 861.7584, email advertising@xlr8r.com, or mail XLR8R Magazine, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.  
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**ON THE COVER:** Trüby Trio photographed by Kareem Black

**CONTACT US:** San Francisco Main Hq. 1388 Haight St. No.105, San Francisco, CA 94117, letters@xlr8r.com, Fax 415.861.7584.

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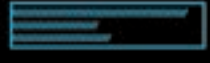


PlayStation 2



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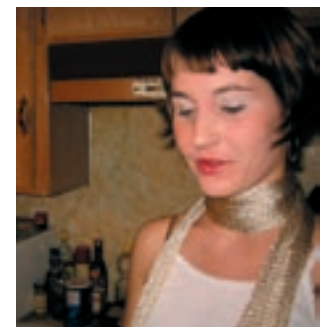
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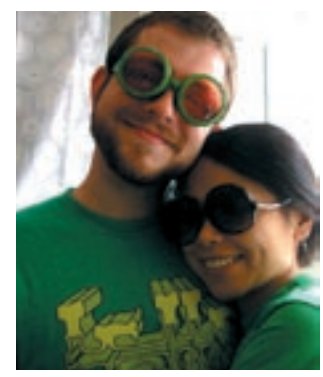
Terms and Conditions apply. Activation fee, other fees and taxes may apply. All fees and programming subject to change. \*Additional equipment and subscription required. Prototype equipment shown. Final product may vary.



## CONTRIBUTORS



**LIZ CORDINGLEY**  
 She's not from Texas, but this lass was transplanted from Britain to a southeast Houston suburb at the wee age of two. Liz has since escaped the industrial stink of H-Town to join the legions of University of Texas grads who are still hanging about in luscious Austin. Her hobbies, aside from the usual journalistic, artistic and music-related endeavors, include preparing vegetarian fusion cuisine in a kitchen that is smaller than her cubicle and kicking her own ass in a weekly body sculpting class.



**KOZYNDAN**  
 Kozyndan are Los Angeles-based mad scientists. They are working on a secret formula for controlled nuclear fusion, and are creating a line of edible chickens. For fun they like to take long deep breaths and dip their heads into bowls of raspberry jelly and lemon curd. They live indoors and don't paint on walls. The couple also moonlights as freelance illustrators. More of kozyndan's work can be found at [www.kozyndan.com](http://www.kozyndan.com).



**TOM OLDHAM**  
 Tom Oldham is a UK-based shootist who's been pestering musicians for about ten years. Ice-cool Nine Persson from The Cardigans shouted at him because of this, which gave him exactly the tone his image needed (as fortune would have it). Swaying to beats in filthy clubs with cameras dangling is where you'll usually find him, then panicking at the end of a gig when he's forgotten he's on assignment. His current pet project is an English four-piece called The Bays who improvise bangingly excellent dance music all over the world, yet have not even one song for sale (see these shots on [thebays.com](http://thebays.com)). Tom has shot for *Sleazenation*, *Jockey Slut*, *URB*, *Nylon*, *Ministry* and countless other beautifully crafted but ill-fated titles. Tom's folios can be found at [www.tomoldham.com](http://www.tomoldham.com).



**TONY WARE**  
 Tony Ware's career began when he used Level 7 Dungeon Master leverage to become editor of a Boy Scout newsletter. Since he has been published in *XLR8R*, *URB*, *The Wire*, *Spin*, *Mademoiselle* and [www.literotica.com](http://www.literotica.com), among others. Based in the (appropriately) Drrrry South, Tony moved to Atlanta, Georgia to reside where the other playas play, and, yes, he rides on them thangs like everyday. As for his Centerfold Turn Offs, this semi-professional Rivers Cuomo impersonator hates it when people pull his thread as he walks away.

// JESKOVA26  
 electronica keyboardist/video artist  
 stream presets\_the vortex/house party/reggae rhythms/planet jazz



Jesko26 is a third generation musician. Her grandmother played trombone in cabarets and her mother was a saxophonist. After studying electronic music in college, she continues the family tradition, combining computer programming and keyboards while she DJs.

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# LETTERS

All letters printed "as is."

## PROTEST SONG

Dear all,  
Due to my recent cancellation of my trip to the US there's a few points I'd like to make clear.  
Firstly, I'd like to apologize for any inconvenience that may have occurred from this. I made my final decision only hours before my flight took off, so it was short notice to everyone. I informed my label both in the U.S. and Europe as soon as I had made my choice (this was when Mr. Bush announced that "Saddam Hussein has 48 hours to leave the country or else" on Monday night).  
I would also like to stress that my protest was not meant against the clubs, the WMC, or the industry—not to mention anyone personally (except maybe Mr. Bush).  
Coming over to the US to party/play at parties simply didn't feel like the proper thing to do while the country was in the middle of a war without the approval of the UN Security Council (admittedly on Tuesday morning it was still almost two days away, but it was evident that it would happen during my two-week trip). Also, I was supposed to take my girlfriend with me and we were supposed to go to Las Vegas for a few days. Again, the idea of gambling and exercising my "Star Trek" hobbies in the US just didn't feel right while bombs were dropping in Baghdad.

In addition, there was the question of personal safety. I am extremely frustrated and disappointed not being able to make it to the WMC and the tour. I also lost almost 800 USD on the hotels and flights.

Having said that, I still think I made the right choice, and I hope you can see this from my point of view as well. Peace,  
Jori Hulkkonen

## STUCK UP IN SUFFOLK?

Groundbreaking as Autechre's music has generally been, Sean Booth was more than just a little whiny about his fans ("The Master Draftsmen", #67). "There's nothing worse than walking into a bar and someone coming up with a Powerbook, opening it up and saying, 'Look what I've been doing!'"

I have a slightly worse scenario in mind. How about if that pesky "someone"—who obviously admires your sullen, hypercritical IDM ass enough to approach you with the idea of sharing music ideas—and his fellow Autechre fans simply stopped buying your masterful releases?

Let's see: lose your remote Suffolk country cottage

studio, or suffer the inconveniences of entertaining an average fan (most of whom—newsflash!—are middle class and own Powerbooks) for five minutes?

Tough choice, innit?

Connie Field  
Rochdale, Mancs

## DRUM AND WHAT?

Dear XLR8R,  
I've been really digging the new design of the magazine over the last couple issues but I have one question for ya: where's the features on drum 'n' bass artists? You have dope reviews of tunes and you always seem to get pretty well-known guest reviewers, but then all your features are on hip-hop, broken beat, house, or techno artists. What about something on Dillinja and Lemon D or Marky and the Brazilian boys or all the US and international producers burning up the scene right now? Where's the jungle love?  
Mark Browder  
Cincinnati, Ohio

## SICK PUPPY

Dear XLR8R,  
If I was on a mission to barf, I would rather ram my whole hand down my throat than read about some fugly freaks inserting microphones into each others bunnies (Issue 66, "Sex Sonics," page 18). Gross. And then to make matters worse, you put in pictures of them. Now not only do I have the memory of the words (oh, the words) but I have some godawful images of those freaks to haunt my dreams. Thanks for nothing. You owe me some Tums, XLR8R. L8R!  
P.S. Don't act like you don't know what I'm talking about. Page 18, on the right.  
Mister Loopy

## CORRECTIONS

In issue 67's Leftfield 12" reviews section in the Apeanaut review we incorrectly attributed the label Redbud Recordings to producer Ticklah (one half of Strikklly Vikkly). The label is in fact run by Chad Snyder a.k.a. DJ Chicus.  
In issue 66's Dave Kelly feature we mistakenly misspelled writer Eddie Houghton's name. In issue 66, Tim Haslett's article on Lenky begins with the quote "Dub is like a long echo delay... balm and shock for the mind, body and spirit." The quote should have been attributed to David Toop, from his book *Ocean of Sound*.

## BITTER BASTARD

### Bitter Bastard's 10 Summer Festival Essentials

#### Camera phone

Perfect for proving to friends that Miss Dinky did actually give you the time of day, or taking surreptitious pictures of Cameron Diaz doing coke at Coachella.

#### Sunglasses

A good pair of Guccis can make you look more important than you are, hide dilated pupils, and help you pretend that you're not rudely staring at your idols.

#### "Mandals"

You will need man sandals to beat the heat, offering the illusion that you're too classy for flip-flops but you still have enough of a "devil may care" attitude to show your bare feet at a dance party. Plus, they'll help you blend in with all the Eurotrash.

#### Sunscreen

The only thing worse than a tubby, pasty-white Englishman is a tubby, tomato red Englishman.

#### Local currency

If you think customs officials, native hotties and mini-cab drivers can be bribed by flashing a press pass and a handful of Orhlorng Musork promo CDs, you're sadly mistaken.

#### One of the girls from W.I.T.

These electroclash hoez iz everywhere. They're as hot as a Dior saddlebag with about as much to say.

#### A wig

A wig will allow you to move seamlessly from the hip-hop tent to the indie tent, all the while looking like you belong. Once you find out what the new hairstyle is that all the fashion kids are rocking, you can cut your wig to fit.

#### Earplugs

Safety is sexy. Plus, a half an hour of Miss Kittin isn't worth a lifetime of tinnitus.

#### Change of underwear

Live shows can be mind-blowing. So can a three-hour Aphex Twin performance after you've eaten a plate of dodgy festival-stand Chinese.

#### Backstage pass

It's everywhere you need to be, including Gold Chains' panties.

## XLR8R'S MATH & SCIENCE CONTEST

This month, the USA's premier D&B record shop, label, and clothing company, **Breakbeat Science**, teams up with outfitters **Alphanumeric** to offer a future-forward prize perfect for multi-media heads. Pushing things forward, BBS proprietor DJ DB unleashes his new limited-edition Tech Headz toys (in numbered runs of 666 each); Deep (the boy) and Dark (the girl), manufactured by Quinlano of Bufalo Club, are composed almost entirely of turntable-derived parts. The mad Scientists also unleash *Exercise.01*, a compilation of solid, funky drum & bass released on the BBS label, and a new series of t-shirts by hot designers including NYC graf artist Lase and Ryan McGinness. Alphanumeric sweetens the deal with their padded multi-media bag, perfect for carrying your laptop, CDs, iPod, spy camera, battery-operated surveillance devices, and any other electronic equipment you need to tote around the city.

To win, you must send us a four-line poem containing the words deep, dark, math and science. Our favorites win! **Grand Prize Winner** will receive an Alphanumeric multi-media bag with two California-edition Tech Headz toys and a copy of *Exercise.01*. **Five Runners-Up** will receive a BBS t-shirt and an *Exercise.01*. CD

Send your answers by mail to: XLR8R's Math & Science Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117; or enter online at [www.xlr8r.com](http://www.xlr8r.com). Include your name, return address, and email address when you enter. Entries must be received by July 8, 2003.

[www.breakbeatscience.com](http://www.breakbeatscience.com) [www.alphanumeric.com](http://www.alphanumeric.com)



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AUDIOFILE:  
A.R.E. WEAPONS**HATE NEVER SOUNDED SO GOOD.**

In the days leading up to my interview with A.R.E. Weapons—commonly misidentified as the posterboys for the new nu-electrocash—I was hated on. Anytime I would mention my imminent interview, my Brooklynite friends would virulently espouse their reasons for despising the band.

“It’s the way they fucking walk. You should see them walk down St. Marks, man. It makes me want to kill them.”

“I went to see them once during the three weeks they were ‘dancehall’ and they came onstage yelling, ‘What’s up my niggas?!’ to a crowd full of Larry Tee devotees. I hate them.”

“Their manager plays in their band with them. I refuse to listen to any band with a manager in it.”

“But, have you heard the record?” I’d reply. Every single one of them said, “No.”

As the liner notes to the first Boston album say, “Listen to the record!”

A.R.E.’s self-titled debut for Rough Trade was two-years in the making—or rather, a season in the making and a year-plus of the record label delaying. “They had no idea what to do with us,” says band manager/member/celebutante Paul Sevigny. It’s easy to see why—the record is dazzling past the point of comprehension. It sounds like something you’d put on for a dance party at your dealer’s house. Rife with paranoia, stuttering 808 kicks and free-love without any of the love, it is New York City in the shadow of doom, battling it out with classic “I (Heart) NY” all night on the prance floor in a white light/white heat euphoria. Too-loud synth horns shank you while frontman Brain F. McPeck gets 5150 about how the end is upon us, in between feel-goody *bon mots* such as, “People think you’re a spaz/just because you’re a spaz/well, spaz on spaz!”

A.R.E. Weapons is life-affirming as it references Suicide and suicide, the good news and the Bad News Bears. It’s a propulsive, glassy-eyed jam-a-thon that truly fucks the rules as it kicks dancehall’s most damaged riddims over atomic bass drops over some guitar part they thugged from a Misfits song. Brain explains it best as he tows A.R.E.’s dichotomous partyline: “You wake in the morning, and either you’re going to fucking live, or you’re going to fucking die.”

[www.roughtrade.com](http://www.roughtrade.com)





**AUDIOFILE:  
CAURAL**

**SWEET VIBRATIONS BLOSSOM FROM ZAK MASTOON'S MIDWEST BASEMENT.**

Zachary Mastoon is Caural. He lives in Evanston, Illinois, next door to Chicago. Close your eyes and let's visit.

Wake up. You are tumbling through a tunnel of grass. The walls swirl with glistening green. Cymbals guide the way. Glowing melodies shimmer like scales from magnetic vibraphones. Hovering jellyfish speak in tongues as bells and handclaps snap thunder from jukeboxes stocked with electro hip-hop. Every part of your being vibrates with resonance. Rhythm and texture flow endlessly. This is Caural's world.

Caural was born in a basement. Before spending a decade on Earth, Zachary Mastoon and pal Stuart Bogie recorded cellar jam sessions on Casio keyboard, electric

guitar, and cheapo microphone. The two lads committed Sun Ra-soaked hip-hop for seven-year-olds to tape. Stuart sprouted into a saxophonist for Afro-Beat all-stars Antibalas, while Mastoon lassooed youthful enthusiasm into the refined spontaneity of Caural. His debut, *Initial Experiments in 3-D*, was a dive into what Mastoon calls, "dimensional music." "(I was) composing from memories to create expressions of space, time, and warmth," he says. "It was an album for myself."

Caural's music blossoms from borrowed notes. "I go to the library, check out ten CDs at a time and pour through them, finding beautiful moments that can be used in new ways," explains Mastoon. From Javanese gamelan to fusion jazz, he excavates exceptional flashes from forgotten wax and ties them into new forms. "I make imag-

ined albums," he says. "I hear sounds I like and say, 'What if this happened next?' It's a remix of what's in my head."

Mastoon is a natural explorer, unfolding inspiration into action. His loops around the world would make Marco Polo blush. Traveling has influenced Caural's work more than anything else. "You get bug eyes in the back of your head," he claims. "You start to see things differently." This nature extends into the studio, where Mastoon freaks for fun—plucking mbira through a wah, recording bricks, and using water bottles as shakers.

"Everything has been done but as long as you act from your origin and dig it, it's cool," explains Mastoon of his mantra. "I strive to be true to myself and make music from my heart and experience." }

*Caural's Blurred July EP is out now.*  
[www.chocolateindustries.net](http://www.chocolateindustries.net)

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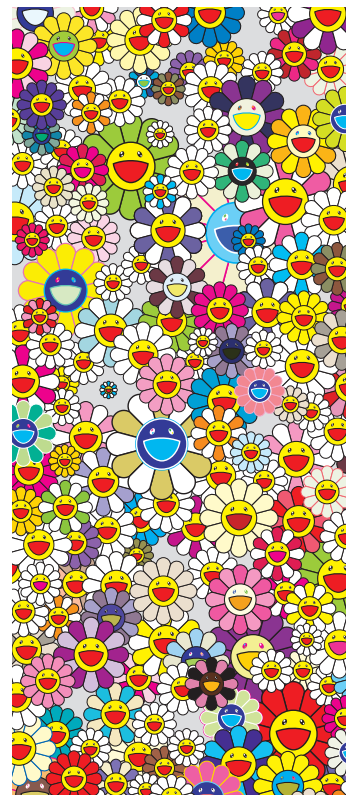
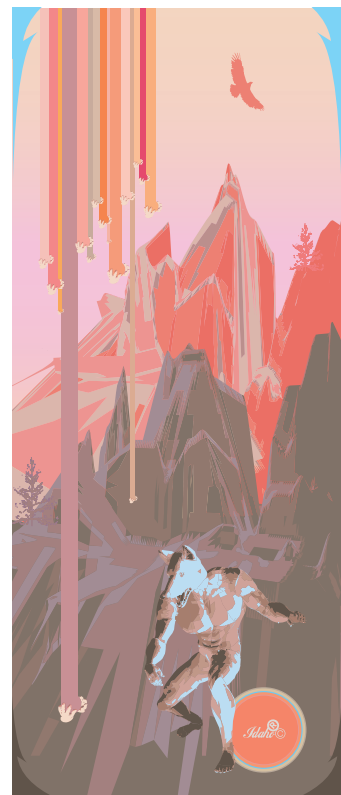
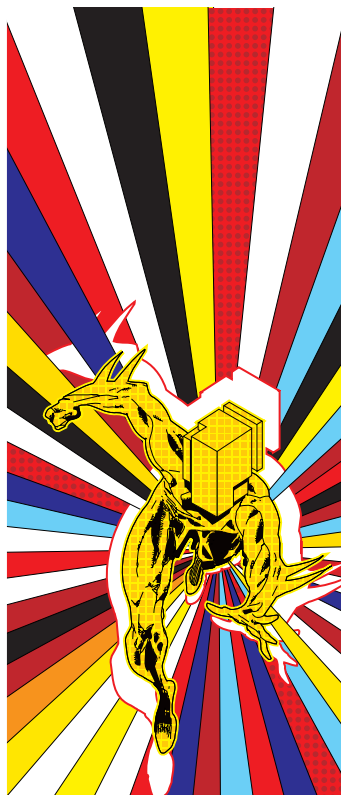
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Kimono fabric designs by (from left): Delta, Tim Shandro, Futura Laboratories and Takashi Murakami

**DAYS OF THUNDER**

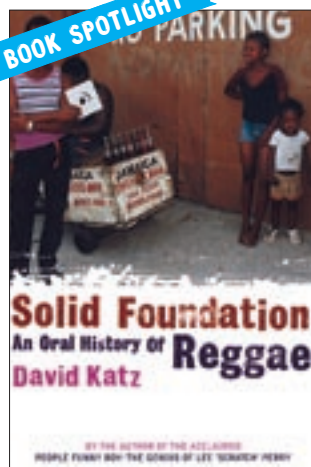
"We'd like to be like a nice sushi bar that offers fresh materials to the people in a simple format," says Yusuke Namba of

Thunderbirds, the agency he runs with partner Yasumasa Yonehara. With Yonehara working from Tokyo and Namba corresponding from Santa Ana, CA, the pair produces events that properly represent cutting-edge artists in the land of the rising sun. One of their recent coups was teaming up with Chiso kimono company and Nigo of Bathing Ape for Yuzen History Mix,

where artists including Stash, Rostarr, and Takashi Murakami had their work reproduced using a 450-year-old fabric-dyeing technique; the show will run in August and September in Copenhagen, moving to Holland in October, and later to North America.

Upcoming projects include a book from Amsterdam's graf star Delta (co-produced with *Relax* magazine), an exhibition and art book with designers kozyndan, and plans to bring Sony's Time Capsule project—with characters designed by Fafi and Derrick Hodgson (MadReal)—to the United States. "Our work is not for the money, but for imagination and creativity," says Namba. "However, we would like to have the power to use money to turn our imagination and creativity into real products." *Vivian Host*

**BOOK SPOTLIGHT**



**SO SOLID** As if to make up for the world's woeful lack of credible reggae magazines, every few years a must-read book on Jamaica's musical gift to the world drops in our laps as if delivered personally by Jah. The best thing about *Solid Foundation* (\$23.95, softcover, Bloomsbury), the second book from David Katz—author of *People Funny Boy: The Genius Of Lee "Scratch" Perry*—is the meticulous attention the writer employs in allowing all parties involved in reggae music's formation to help tell its 40-year narrative. Reggae's timeline, song titles, musicians, and studio runnings, as well as the political and cultural climate surrounding the genre, are broken down by the architects themselves throughout this 350-page "oral history." Sound system operator Duke Vin talks about the origins of his trade in the 1950s; Brent Dowe and Pat Kelly wax lyrical about the great rocksteady vocal groups they helped form; Sly & Robbie discuss the "flying cymbal" rhythm patterns of the roots-rockers era; and the Roots Radics band and DJ Lone Ranger describe the rub-a-dub dancehall period in lively detail. The book ends just as reggae is about to turn digital, but that's okay. There's plenty of vivid historical imagery and revealing confessions to be pondered in the years until Katz's next authoritative volume arrives. *Tomas Palermo*

[www.bloomsbury.com/usa](http://www.bloomsbury.com/usa)

**IN THE FUTURE:  
SHARAM OF DEEP DISH**



*In the future, dance music as we know it will no longer exist. The illegal downloading and copying of dance music will eventually lead to the death of vinyl, whose primary reason for existence is DJs. The death of vinyl equals the death of independent dance labels, which will lead to the death of underground/bedroom dance producers who will not have any other avenue to promote and release their work. Result? Dance music as we know it will not be around.*

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**DRUM & BASS VETERAN ROLLS HIS SPELL-BINDING TUNES OUT SMOOTH AND SIMPLE.**

"I'm torn between getting drunk and getting my work done," moans Andrew Sappleton jokingly from his home in rainy Manchester. Sappleton—better known in the drum & bass world as Sappo—has his hands too full to go out drinking with the boys. He's got remixes for Roni Size's dancefloor-smashing "Playtime" track due soon and three PCs in his studio just blew up.

Things haven't been this hectic for Sappleton since 1996, when "Ding Dong Bass"—his opus of rumbling, tear-out basslines and bouncy hip-hop breaks—escalated to the Top 10 charts of nearly every well-known jungle DJ. In the years since, Sappleton—who once dreamed of being a PE teacher—has been quietly releasing a series of subtle, rolling breakbeat gems that are deceptively simple and danceable.

Sappleton's tunes have none of the snarling, hell-hound distortion that Bad Company popularized or the glossy, made-for-radio sounds of an EZ Rollers or Shy FX tune. Inspired by hip-hop producers from Pete Rock to Prefuse 73, he seeks to distill the drum & bass genre down to its basic elements, creating a smooth, easy flow. "My sound is warm and round," he says. "Which is kind of hip-hop-inspired, isn't it? You just do a nice bassline and get some breaks rollin', but nothing's too driven and noisy."

Sappleton's recent "Sudden Impact" EP (on his own imprint, Advisory Records) is the best showcase yet of the man's brand of future funk, made more compelling by rich, syrupy low-end and effective hooks that harken back to the golden era of jump-up jungle. "The mid-'90s were cool," says Sappleton.

"There was a lot of trouble at [jungle] events but they had a lot more soul to them back then and people were quite genuine.

Now, [drum & bass] is more like house music—it's more institutionalized. It would be nice to bring back some of the basslines back to the music. Some people are doing it, like Calibre, the Full Cycle lot, and DJ Zinc, but it's still not enough for me."

[www.advisoryrecords.com](http://www.advisoryrecords.com)

AUDIOFILE:  
SAPPO



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Foley

## KAOS THEORY

Like any self-respecting Transformer, there's more to Berlin's **DJ Kaos** than meets the eye. You may be familiar with his substantial discography as part of mid-'90s music muckers

Terranova, but his latest project is an all-out audio assault with old skating partner CE.EL as **Ghost Cauldron**. On *Invent Modest Fires*, the duo introduces a spooky brew of songs as they ride around the night sky on their wickedly eclectic magical broomsticks. Recently, DJ Kaos shared the four major influences for his potent Ghost Cauldron potion. *Brion Paul*

**Graffiti:** Fifteen years ago in Berlin there were three or four people doing graffiti and I was one of them. I'm done with that. I still like to look at it, I just don't want to do it again. I really like Reas and Kaws, they're fucking amazing. They should do it—they're much better than me.

**Berlin:** Berlin is fucking amazing. To be honest, club-wise it's fucking happening; 700–800 people per week show up with no promotion. It was boring the last eight or ten years, but so many cool people have moved in and they love to party—maybe too much. Drugs are big, coke is big, and parties go until eight or nine in the morning. Maybe it's going a little insane, I don't know.

**Skateboarding:** I used to skateboard. A lot. This was in the early '90s and Berlin had a very good skate scene. That's how I met Thomas Maroch from *Lodown Magazine*. He did the majority of the artwork for the Ghost Cauldron album. Actually, Ghost Cauldron is with this old skate friend of mine CE.EL. I still hang out with lots of skate kids. When I DJ, they all come over and party like crazy pigs.

**London:** I really don't like London. It's a European city, but it's become such a rip-off. It's not human. When you go to a city, you should feel comfortable and have a good time. And London's not about having a good time. It's a rush, and expensive. Why is it so expensive? I don't get it.

*Invent Modest Fires is out now on K7. A single with remixes from UNKLE & Superpitcher is out soon. www.k7.com*

## BOOK SPOTLIGHT

**VERTICAL THOUGHTS** The WTC bombing is a touchy subject, indeed. So when book publisher Verso asked three of Europe's most prominent, outspoken, and controversial cultural critics for their analysis of the event, eyebrows raised to the ceiling. The results, though, are philosophical perfection, and they appear as *The Spirit of Terrorism*, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* and *Ground Zero* (paperback; \$13, Verso), respectively written by Jean Baudrillard, Slavoj Zizek, and Paul Virilio.

Each book offers powerful and highly readable commentary that whirlwinds around the specter of the towers; together the texts raise an indelibly valuable dialogue where many are still afraid to step. The series touches on topics including the role of media, the definition of terrorism and the global value systems, and even deconstructs H.G. Wells and the Bruce Willis film, *Unbreakable*, with authors slowly piecing together extraordinary ideas and ideals from one poetic line to the next. *Matt Eberhart*

[www.versobooks.com](http://www.versobooks.com)



**MOLLY** (Bratmobile's drummer and The Donnas manager)

*How many times have you been to Coachella?*

This is my second.

*What artists are you most excited to see?*

Mars Volta, Primal Scream, Iggy and the Stooges

*What song always reminds you of summer?*

"Heart & Soul" by T'Pau and "Pleasure Principle" by Janet Jackson

*What's your favorite thing that you're wearing?*

My fake ponytail.



**JAMIE** (South's guitarist)

*How many times have you been to Coachella?*

This is my first time.

*What artists are you most excited to see?*

Queens of the Stone Age. They're just so pure and heavy and raw and sexy.

*What's the best summer fashion accessory?*

Ankle socks. I like to let my ankles breathe.

*What song always reminds you of summer?*

DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince, "Summertime"



**ALINA** (Cocktail waitress)

*How many times have you been to Coachella?*

I've never been before.

*What artists are you most excited to see?*

Primal Scream, Interpol, White Stripes

*What song always reminds you of summer?*

The Pixies "Gigantic"

*What's the best thing about Coachella besides the music?*

Getting together with your friends from all over.

## ON THE SPOT: COACHELLA

Now in its fourth year, the weekend-long Coachella Festival (April 26-27) draws about 25,000 concert-goers to a polo field outside of Palm Springs, California with a well thought-out line-up that combines mainstream talent with cutting-edge rock, electronic and hip-hop acts. Two stages and three tents played host to headliners like the Beastie Boys, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Sonic Youth, but the real surprises of Coachella 2003 were the propulsive dance rock of Ima Robot and Interpol, the garage

rock squeal of Hot Hot Heat and Rooney, and the chin-scratching, near-performance-art spectacle of acts like the Polyphonic Spree and Fischerspooner. The electronic tent was packed from noon 'til midnight, although the line-up—including Roger Sanchez, Underworld, and Felix da Housecat—was a tad predictable. We polled a few artists and festival attendees about what makes Coachella sizzle. *Vivian Host*



**DUSTIN** (Hot Hot Heat's bassist)

*How many times have you been to Coachella?*

It's my first time.

*What artists are you most excited to see?*

The Rapture, Peanut Butter Wolf, and the Def Jux showcase

*What's the best summer fashion accessory?*

Sunglasses, because I never wear shorts.

*What song always reminds you of summer?*

"This Charming Man" by The Smiths



**EL-P** (MC and Def Jux label founder)

*How many times have you been to Coachella?*

Zero.

*What artists are you most excited to see?*

Queens of the Stone Age and Mars Volta, which I missed, and the Chili Peppers.

*What's the best summer fashion accessory?*

Well, I've been thinking about rocking an ascot...but really, shorts.

*What's the best thing about Coachella besides the music?*

The mountains and the sun.



**RAENA** (PA)

*How many times have you been to Coachella?*

Every year.

*What artists are you most excited to see?*

Sonic Youth, Iggy & the Stooges

*What song always reminds you of summer?*

"Reveal" by R.E.M.

*What's your favorite thing that you're wearing?*

My new socks from Paul Frank.

## SKAM ARTISTS

You'd think that electronic music, so rich in texture and tone color, should yield fascinating visual complements. But all too often it's debased by tired "futuristic" clichés and drugged-out rave imagery that takes the lava lamp as an avant-garde design motif. The new DVD from **MEAM** (US\$16; *Skam Records*), Skam's in-house videologists, shows that it's way too early to consign the form to the dustbin of acid house. Recycling images from their live sets for Bola, the Mancunian duo cuts industrial graphics into dense, psychedelic collages set to stuttering hip-hop beats and DSP meltdown. Turntable cartridges and

syringes become needle-nosed fish; PVC tubing is bent into spaceships housing infinite interior dimensions; and flower petals provide the engine fuel for breathtaking interstellar pyrotechnics. The crux of the half-hour DVD is a segment of stop-frame animation that effectively puts you inside the creators' heads; the sequence builds to a climax of iconic images (satellite dish, chipped tooth, dandelion puff) that flash by like the last moments of a life. Chris

Cunningham, watch out! *Philip Sherburne*

[www.skam.co.uk](http://www.skam.co.uk)





**CHICAGO ANTI-HERO TIM KINSELLA USES CONFUSION TO ENLIGHTEN.**

Tim Kinsella is sitting, smoking, on a dirty wool couch in the dressing room of San Francisco's Bottom of the Hill nightclub, a thousand-yard stare plastered on his face. He doesn't look the part of Midwest emo-punk hero: no carefully chosen vintage gas station jacket or black low-top Chuck Taylors. Instead, Kinsella is unselfconsciously hip in no-name jeans, a band t-shirt, and a brown pullover sweater. He could be the guy who drives the senior center shuttle. But this is how real rock icons are, molded not from *American Idol* plastic but from Minutemen and Naked Raygun-era grit,

charm and guitar snarl.

Twenty-eight year-old Kinsella's fifth album as Joan of Arc, *So Much Staying Alive and Lovelessness* (a sixth comes out on Perishable this year), picks up the jagged riffs of his 2001 release and enlivens them with truck-stop epiphanies and a patchwork of arcane American roots music.

For all intents and purposes, Kinsella is JOA, although regular players include his brother Mike on drums and bassist Sam Zurick. A half dozen others play on the new record; they're all credited as different band names, which is confusing, but also a nod to Kinsella's respect for individuality. "Each of us will change each person's part [as we play it]," he says "We all have a lot of input." Ambiguity is the rule, not the exception, in

Kinsella's music career, which also includes stints in Cap'n Jazz and Owls.

On "Perfect Need And Perfect Completion," amid a slow dust storm of piano and Rhodes keyboards, he lays down evocative lyrics. "*The wind against us slowed down/so we checked out a gun show in a ghost town,*" Kinsella draws mysteriously. "*In a gas station window/in the dust and the sun/we were shaped like overlapping ghosts.*" The song's dynamics are certainly more subtle than the scope of mainstream pop. "I just want [my music] to be honest and immediate," says Kinsella. Immediate it is, if that means stop/start, quiet/loud, and then...uncertainty ]

[www.jadetree.com](http://www.jadetree.com)

**AUDIOFILE:  
JOAN OF ARC**



Joan of Arc (from left): Sam Zurick, Nathan Kinsella, Mike Kinsella, Guy Love and Tim Kinsella

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soon come...  
**him**  
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**WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?: BEANS**

*XLR8R* style stalwart Brion Paul corners avant-garde rapper and former Anti-Pop Consortium MC Beans on the grim and rainy streets of NYC and asks, "What's up with your personal style?"

**What are you wearing?**

**HAT:** This is one of five custom-made pink trucker hats, with the Beans logo designed by Ron Croudy and captured on hat by Msaki.  
**T-SHIRT:** It's by ICR vs. Deth Killers. I did a show with them, doing some modeling, some runway. That's how I got in touch with them. They were nice enough to send me some stuff to use for my video, and they gave me this t-shirt.  
**JACKET:** Yoko Deveraux. This is the jacket I wore on the album cover, and it has a matching scarf to go with it. I'm in love with the design.  
**PANTS:** Rogan. To be honest, these are the only pants I wear. They just wear-in nice and they're comfortable.  
**NECKLACE (not visible):** Custom-made Beans name plate.  
**SHOES:** Nike Brown Blazers.  
**RING:** Daniel Jackson for Surface to Air.

**Where do you shop?**

It varies. I tend to shop [for clothes] more overseas than here in the States. I mean, I shop at all the usual suspects in New York, don't get me wrong. You know, there's Isa, Alife, Seven, to name a few. Union is also good. I mainly like [the brand] Burro, and you really can't get Burro here. I usually shop at the Burro store in London, as well as Zoltar the Magnificent and Pineal Eye.

**What do you look for in an item?**

Originality and design.

**From where does one's style originate?**

It's a reflection of self-postmodern.

**What's the most frightening clothing item lurking in your closet?**

I usually get rid of things I don't need.

**Prediction for fashion trend of 2020?**

Pink (the color).



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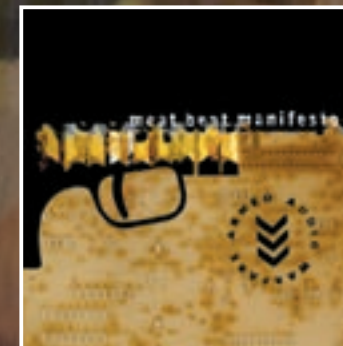
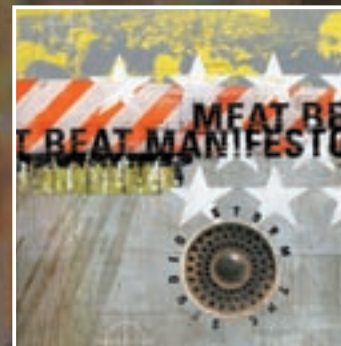
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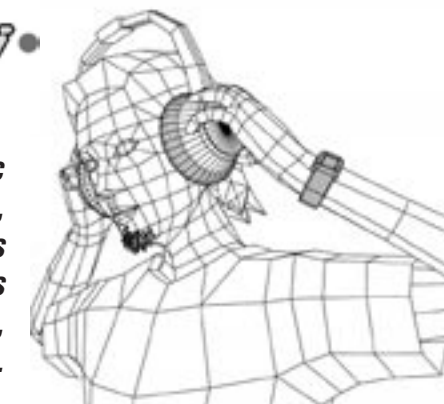
**CITY OF GOD REMIXED**

The very best Brazilian electronic artists and DJs serve up passionate remixes of the music featured in the critically acclaimed film CITY OF GOD. A breathtaking example of filmmaking on the edge, this MIRAMAX PICTURES release has been hailed as a guiding light for international independent cinema. The artists featured on the CITY OF GOD REMIXED album, redefined the intensity and vision of the film and its music with nationalistic pride.

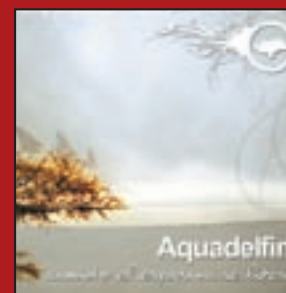


**Kenishi FutureLight**

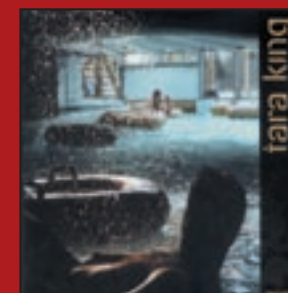
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VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

**KING OF ROUTE 66** (Sega/Playstation 2/\$49.99)

Race hillbilly bandits with your 18-wheeler for cash and biker-babe trash.

**Gameplay:** Arcade-style racing game with trucks that has mini-missions in between races for variety. Controls are decent, with uneven degrees of difficulty throughout the game.

**Graphics:** Reminiscent of early '90s arcade games and very Sega.

**Soundtrack:** Generic heavy-rock, with an irritating faux Texan commentator.

**Rating:** 5/10



**MIDNIGHT CLUB II** (Rockstar/PS2, Xbox, PC/\$49.99)

Race through city streets of LA, Tokyo, and Paris, beating opponents to get access to new levels and better cars.

**Gameplay:** Solid handling, although cars seem a little light-weight. Game allows you to take various race routes and shortcuts to the finish line, with arrows and maps leading the way. Limited car customization options.

**Graphics:** Gritty nighttime cityscapes are cleverly, if not painstakingly, rendered.

**Soundtrack:** Euro-trance and pumping house meets Miss Kittin and purpose-made hip-hop.

**Rating:** 8/10



**STATE OF EMERGENCY** (Rockstar/Playstation 2, Xbox/\$19.99)

Beat, shoot, and maim as many people as you can, either solo or with your buddies (multiplayer only on Xbox).

**Gameplay:** Nothing too complicated here. Kick, punch, shoot and pick up stuff with an arcade game feel.

**Graphics:** Comic-book silliness with literally dozens of characters on screen at once. Chaotic.

**Soundtrack:** Skulls cracking and bones breaking.

**Rating:** 7/10



**PRIMAL** (Sony/Playstation 2/\$39.99)

Grown-up Dungeons & Dragons fans will enjoy this demonic action/adventure title with an involved storyline.

**Gameplay:** Primal's got four fun worlds to explore, but it's too complicated unless you've got a bag of speed and 12 hours to spare. It's dope to switch off between characters Jen and Scree, but the combat is poorly developed and repetitive.

**Graphics:** Characters rendered in Tomb Raider-style cartoon realism travel through elaborate and beautifully colored netherworlds.

**Soundtrack:** Rock band 16 Volt kicks out the jams during combat, but otherwise it's all moody orchestration by the Prague Philharmonic.

**Rating:** 6.5/10



Reviews by Mike Gwertzman/Vivian Host/Kjetil Sagstad

TOMORROW, TODAY

What costume shall the poor girl wear to All Tomorrow's Parties? A jean jacket, some band pins and a hooded black

sweatshirt, by the looks of things. Though the electronic and experimental hip-hop-heavy line-up of the Autechre-curated UK weekender (held April 4-6) featured such old school heads as A Guy Called Gerald, Baby Ford and Coil, the Los Angeles and New York dates of this popular yearly fête look to be much more punk-informed. The line-up of the LA festival (June 19-22) reads like the track-listing on the world's best road trip mixtape: dance punk from Le Tigre and !!! collides with beautiful noise from Mogwai, the Boredoms, and Trail of Dead. Experimental godfathers The Fall, Jah Wobble, Wire and the Melvins also make an appearance at the four-day LA event, where the line-up has been hand-picked by Simpsons creator Matt Groening. Pavement's Stephen Malkmus (fronting his new band, The Jicks) is supposedly in charge of the roster for the New York installment of ATP, but as of press time organizers' lips are sealed as to who is playing and when. Vivian Host

www.atpfestival.com



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Mogwai

**SPIN CYCLE** In homage to KPFF and now-defunct LA AM dial hip-hop station **KDAY** (where gangsta rap first aired), entrepreneur Oran Z has started **Liberation Radio**. The station, at 87.7 FM, can be heard in and around Los Angeles' Crenshaw District. Check [www.libradio.com](http://www.libradio.com) for more • Speaking of gangsta: **Priority Records** has just reissued NWA member **MC Ren's** debut, *Kizz My Black Azz* • San Francisco duo **Broker/Dealer** have just unleashed two CDs of minimal techno goodness on **Asphodel Records** • Anime returns: Out this month is *Cowboy Bebop*, the movie of the popular Japanese cartoon, and the *Animatrix*, a series of animated shorts by the creators of *The Matrix*. *Macross* director **Shinichiro Watanabe** is behind both • **Soul II Soul** will release their *Africa Centre* album June 23 on UK label Casual. The Jazzie B mix will feature specials and anthems from the club, including tunes from **Shabba Ranks, Junior Reid, and Roy Ayers** • Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, Barcelona's music and multimedia festival **SONAR** touches down **June 12-14**. This year's eclectic roster features Björk, Aphex Twin, Metro Area and Oxide & Neutrino • WMC 2003 played host to the first annual **DanceStar Awards**; P Diddy debuted his new dance direction, *Dirty Vegas* won three awards, and **Wesley Snipes** walked off with a prize for best Celebrity DJ • Independent hip-hoppers **Bomb Records** have just dropped new releases from **Bavu Blakes** and **Ultra X**, perfect for fans of **The Roots** and **Wu-Tang**, respectively. Bomb founder Dave Paul says he might quit the biz if consumers aren't biting. Listen and learn at [www.bombusa.com](http://www.bombusa.com) • Stick it: Both DC's **Q And Not U** and NY's **Interpol** had to cancel May tour dates after their drummers sustained injuries; a broken foot and a stressed nerve in the arm, respectively • After nine years, **Deep Dish** producers **Dubfire** and **Sharam** celebrate the **100<sup>th</sup> release** on their vaunted house label **Yoshitoshi**. Also look out for compilation *In House We Trust 3* and much more 4/4 on their Shinichi and YO Recordings sublabels • Poetic firebrand **Saul Williams** and sometime Blackalicious vocalist **Erin Annova** just rapped up starring in the play *Tibi's Law* at LA's Stages Theatre Centre • Respect to jazz great **Nina Simone**, who died April 21 at her home in the South of France • **Certificate 18** owner Paul Arnold's breaks label **Fat! Records** turns five this month • Also broken: nu-skool stars **BLIM, Shut Up & Dance** and **Champion Soul** all release albums this summer • Congress recently passed a bill—part of Sen. Joseph Biden's **Amber Alert Act**—that would extend "crack house" laws to target venue owners who host raves. • Kinky reggae? No, **punky reggae**. Visit [www.punkcast.com](http://www.punkcast.com) for irie video clips • **Radical politics** meet **pop surrealism** at [www.magicpropagandamill.com](http://www.magicpropagandamill.com) and **culture gets deconstructed** at [www.evilmonito.com](http://www.evilmonito.com) • Stop press.

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AUDIOFILE:  
CALIFONE

**AMERICANA PICKS UP ANALOG FUZZ ON A DUSTY, RAMBLING ROAD.**

Following the demise of fuzzed-out indie croakers Red Red Meat in 1997, Chicagoan Tim Rutili began a series of solitary, computer-soaked sessions. The project, which emerged as Califone, was named after an (appropriately) antiquated, nigh indestructible turntable, through whose input and rudimentary speaker much of Califone's earliest source material was run. "It just gave everything this real brittle, Civil War-feel, appealing to my love of things that feel eternal, like the source," says Rutili.

Since trading submerged blues-rock swagger for a more rural roads roll, Califone has released a steady (schedule-wise, at

least) stream of music over the last five years. The tunes bridge old-time sounds and time-honored human ingenuity with technological techniques both time-tested and ahead-of-their-time. Rutili focuses on giving the ghost in the machine voice, letting the spirit in the music take control and morph each track into something unique.

Helping develop Califone's series of back-porch inner-dub dialogues is a revolving cast (now tour-stabilized) of Perishable Records contributors. The culmination is Califone's more organically-derived fourth full-length, *Quicksand/Cradlesnakes* (the group's Thrill Jockey debut). The album finds Rutili further refining his rustic, rusted ramblings, inspired by music from Captain Beefheart to *Bitches Brew*, into folk-blues

ballads flecked by digital detritus.

"There's one song, 'Million Dollar Funeral,' that's just this little acoustic song, but the other day I started singing over this drumbeat and now the song is [like] a fucked-up Can song," says Rutili. "There's space and cues in every song to move and know when to bail. It's just what the song wanted and where the musicians take it. We do a lot of improvising so ideas always pop up...and we listen to what the ghosts are asking for and try to give it to them."

Filtering hoarse, crackling Appalachia through battered electronics set to truck-stop grit and tall-tale tempos—tapping slithering improvisation's rich vein and flooding the stream-of-consciousness main—Califone

has bridged miasmic distance with intimate, close mic'ed cadence. Seemingly stoned swells are delivered with sobering astuteness. It's all just a matter of unfolding another layer of self and, if lucky, tapping into a collective consciousness others may be able to hear as well, says Rutili.

"It's all learning how to listen. There are all these little voices and maybe one really distinct one you have. And a lot of this music comes from there. It's when you're making aesthetic decisions without thinking—moments you're catching that feel transcendent. That's what we're really interested in doing."

*Califone's Quicksand/Cradlesnakes is out now on Thrill Jockey Records. [www.thrilljockey.com](http://www.thrilljockey.com)*



ZINE PATROL

Cute, stylish and more intriguing to read on the bus ride home than *Rolling Stone*, zines maintain a special place in the heart of word junkies the world over. Here are four titles we're stuffing in our fanny packs this month. *Vivian Host*



Chicago's newsprint *Media Reader* (US\$1) presents digestible commentary on stomach-unsettling topics such as Botswana's AIDS epidemic and the situation in Chiapas, alongside interviews with young revolutionaries and reviews of all the indie rock albums you can shake a stick at. Perfect reading for that organic coffee break in between writing your master's thesis and listening to the new Pedro the Lion record. [www.mediareader.org](http://www.mediareader.org)



Don't let the retro '90s design fool you, *Undercover Magazine* (UK£2.99) is 100% present day British street culture. Iron your Moschino jeans and get out your boxfresh Air Max, then sit down to interviews with the most important names in hip-hop, UK garage, dub, and drum & bass. Names you know—Talib Kweli, Heartless Crew, Gilles Peterson—meet up with names you should know, like Jean Grae, Skitz, and Fresh. Live reviews, record reviews, a free CD, and articles on everything from graf to capoeira to Shaolin monks seal the deal. [www.undercovermagazine.com](http://www.undercovermagazine.com)



Arguably the most stylish thing ever out of Jersey City, *Repellent* (US\$8.50) is 200 sporadically-published pages of digital era orgasm, where James Lavelle locks legs with the proprietors of roving underground club Le Bomb and models in punk prep gear swivel hips with Kitty-Yo's reformed lounge crooner Louie Austen. Filling the space between black-and-white DIY zine and coffee table book, and only on its second issue! [www.repellentzine.com](http://www.repellentzine.com)



Clocking in at an adorable 8" x 8", Australian bi-monthly zine *Cyclic Defrost* chronicles the new music and art exploding from deep in the Southern hemisphere. A peek inside covers designed by upstarts like Rinzen and the Sopp Collective reveals interviews with Clue to Kalo, Tim Koch of Tundra Music, and Zed Bias, as well as in-depth local and international CD reviews, dissertations on Scott Baio's career and info on the underground Punjabi dance scene. The mag is free for Australians; other continentals can catch it on the internet. [www.cyclicdefrost.com](http://www.cyclicdefrost.com)

**BETTER OFF DED** *Dedbeat Weekender* (held February 28-March 2, 2003 at Pontins Holiday Village in Norfolk, England) is like a big playground: a semi-surreal, self-contained holiday village where blurry-eyed headz clad in oversized clothes can turn speed ramps into skateboarding tools, smoke weed sticks the size of snooker cues and listen to the dopest collection of live music this side of Planet B-Boy. It's no surprise that, in the three years since its inception, the event has become an increasingly attractive proposition for UK music fans—especially those that enjoy a spot of hip-hop.

Although Deadbeat's emphasis is indubitably on rap of all styles, organizers of the three-day festival also present musical styles that have informed hip hop (funk, soul, dub) as well as genres that have been informed by hip-hop, such as electro, drum & bass and trip-hop. Choosing content over glamour has enabled the promoters to keep the music policy

tight. This year's main room, called Beat Ranks, featured old school faves Brand Nubian and nu-skool savant-gardists including Mike Ladd, Def Jux, Buck 65, and audio theater practitioners Boom Bip and Dose One; hot performances were also delivered by Blackalicious (devastating despite the absence of the Gift Of Gab), Peanut Butter Wolf, Earl Zinger, Quantic Soul Orchestra and the inimitable MC Pitman—a rapper who dresses as a coal miner and raps in a broad Yorkshire accent about biscuits and battered sausages.

The other two areas emphasized DJs, with the likes of Keith Tenniswood, Andrew Weatherall, Mike Paradinas, Venetian Snares and Ed DMX creating a firin' club environment in Pulse Ranks, and skewed rulers like Luke Vibert, Christian Vogel and DJ Rubbish behaving in an eclectic manner in Slump Ranks. Overgrown playground for arrested adultercents, sure—but the soundtrack is unbeatable. *Paul Sullivan* [www.dedbeat.net](http://www.dedbeat.net)



Dedbeat partygoer before



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Paul Sullivan



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Wildchild and Lootpack DJ Romes

**LOOTPACK MC RESPONDS TO THE CALL OF THE WILD.**

*"It's very rough to continue 10 years strong/the raw star track architect taking you to where no ears have gone."*

Wildchild's verbose rhyme style is no accident. He speaks like he raps, words piling up on each other as if they can't wait to be said; and yet, his hurried phrases are delivered in a laconic drawl.

Wildchild—Jack Brown, according to his birth certificate—is best known as one-third of the Lootpack, but the renegade MC now steps up with his debut long-player, *Secondary Protocol*. Even though the album is a solo endeavor, it's still a family affair, with the production handled by

Lootpack's Madlib and 'Lib's younger brother Oh No, and the 'pack's DJ Romes providing a strong turntable presence ("I always try to bring the DJ in, 'cuz that's hip-hop," Brown states).

The real star, though, is Brown. And if you think you know how he's kicking it on this album...well, that's exactly how he wants it. "I'm trying to catch everybody off-guard," Brown notes. "[This album] is more personal [than the Lootpack album]. I started recording May of 2002. It only took me, like, six months, but that six months wasn't me hardcore in the studio. I was busy outside, going through family issues and stuff like that. I wasn't able to just lock myself in the studio, which is how I wish I could've done it, but it worked out cool."

Whether writing free-form lyrics or writing to a beat (Brown figures the album is evenly split between the two), his biggest muse is his daughter—the subject of the excellent track "Kiana." "She's what keeps me doing this," Brown confides. "Besides just the fun [of rhyming], she's what influenced me to make a business out of it."

Plenty of people rhyme for the fun of it, but the music industry is full of stress that has caused many a promising talent to walk away. Brown ain't having that—neither for him nor Kiana. "There's so much negativity out there, and it keeps me humble and focused," he says. "All the haters and all the cats that are underestimating, that's kinda inspiring."

[www.stonesthrow.com](http://www.stonesthrow.com)

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*"Gold Chains has the British press drooling in their pants. This gravel-voiced Romeo's striking music is a killer combination of scrambled Autechre-y rave, thumping glitch-hop, and reprocessed ragga...seems like the perfect marriage between asexual electronica and boot-rooted ghetto rap." - VICE*

Eject the slick porn DVD and let the indie freaky deak in you out to play."  
 —XLR8R Magazine

Get the DVD at [betalounge.com](http://betalounge.com)







RT: TERMS LIKE THAT ARE MADE TO FAIL  
WE WERE "ACID JAZZ"  
THEN IT BECAME VERY UNTRENDY.  
SO IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE



TO IDENTIFY US 'TIL WE BECAME  
BY THE MEDIA AS "NU-JAZZ."  
NOW THAT IS BECOMING LESS TRENDY  
BUT I'M SURE WE'LL SURVIVE THE DEATH OF NU-JAZZ AS WELL.  
I'M WONDERING WHAT'S THE NEXT

REBORN  
REBORN  
REBORN  
REBORN  
REBORN  
REBORN

LABEL.  
L.L.

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LABEL.







CP:

WE'RE ALL GETTING

OLDER.  
OLDER.

OLDE  
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ULL  
ER.

WE NO LONGER SPEND SO

MUCH TIME

IN THE CLUBS

OUR LIFE DOESN'T

CIRCLE AROUND THIS

SATURDAY NIGHT

EXPERIENCE.

that is becoming less trendy, but I'm sure we'll survive the death of nu-jazz as well. I'm wondering what's the next label.

CP: "Elevator Music."

XLR8R: *Why Elevator Music? It doesn't seem to apply to such actively structured, attention-grabbing music.*

CP: The idea was wouldn't it be great if you ended up in elevators where you didn't want to leave immediately, you just went from floor to floor because you liked the music. That's our dream, to live in a world where you like and get inspired by the music in even the most unlikely of places. Imagine being stuck in an elevator nowadays with the music people have to hear. Our dream is to hear honest music that doesn't suffer from the commercial system. Everyone may not identify with our concept, but why make music that doesn't challenge people?

**PART TWO: ALL RHODES LEAD HOME**

As Trüby, the Trio's most reserved member, momentarily ducks into Costume National, a warm and woollen Appel—a collector of contemporary design—peers longingly through the glass of a vintage furniture store next door.

XLR8R: *Do you see parallels between music*

*and the designs of physical objects—such as furniture—that you lean towards?*

Roland Appel: It's progressive on the one hand, but made to last on the other. It's not only for consuming. Every day you see it, it's nice again. That's what I like in the music as well. You can listen again and again and find new aspects of it.

XLR8R: *Is the music retro-futurist or futurist retro?*

RA: It's always good to know about the past, and if you do, you can't help but bring it into your work. But you should look forward and try to bring your knowledge and taste to something new. For me, it's more knowing about retro things and bringing them into a new context.

XLR8R: *As producers for not only Trüby Trio but also Fauna Flash and Voom:Voom [with Austrian dub/downtempo meister Peter Kruder], how do you differentiate for whom you're developing ideas?*

CP: It's the chemistry of the finished track. Roland and myself do the sessions, while Rainer goes and spreads the word. But we know instinctively what tracks he will feel. With Trüby Trio there's more a blueprint from the past, while Fauna Flash is more experimental—we waste more time trying things out. We like three-dimensional rhythms. There was a time when there couldn't be enough shakers

and bongos and triangles and cymbals. Now, however, we want to use the vocabulary that's there, without all the additional words that make the sentence hard to translate.

XLR8R: *After working on Fauna Flash's album Fusion, did you walk away with any specific benefits?*

RA: *Fusion* was the first time we'd experienced mixing and writing music for vocals. In the beginning we didn't care about lyrics and stuff. We learned a lot that we put towards the Trüby Trio album, even developing two layouts for it that were originally meant as Fauna Flash material.

XLR8R: *Is there a specific instrument that's elemental to your sound that exposed itself while you put together Elevator Music?*

CP: There's something to our electronic drum machine, the MPC-3000, and the sound-processing gear. Last year in New York, we bought an equalizer made in New Jersey in the '70s that changed the world for us. Instead of going inside the computer, we sent everything out, and everything was given this very bright feeling. Also, we always use Fender Rhodes on all the tracks. But there's no formula—that's why the album took so long. Really, it's not the instruments, it's the players. They bring out something vital on our productions. They're not too technical or

too advanced, yet they're all very versatile. I prefer musicians who have something to say rather than something to show.

XLR8R: *Do you sense that people are generally putting more musicality into their tracks?*

CP: I think DJ/producers will concentrate again on making music. A few years ago there was [a] formula that worked, and so many people were busy DJing around the world that they just made tracks that fit this formula. You have to get away from playing others' music to create something. Roland and I stopped playing last year except a handful of shows, because otherwise you live in your record box, not yourself.

RA: There was a time five years ago when all the computer stuff and bedroom studios made sounds so easy to make. Now there are so many records that it's not good enough to just make a track. The good thing is that producers from our scene started as computer kids, so now they want to do more songwriting.

CP: We're all getting older. We no longer spend so much time in the clubs. Our life doesn't circle around this Saturday night experience.

RA: And there's a really big difference between doing singles and making an album. Many

labels were about singles, but now more and more producers are trying to do an album. That puts you in a position to tell a story, which is not always easy to do.

XLR8R: *What story did you want to tell with this album?*

CP: No constant theme really unfolded, but we weren't just making a track and moving on. We developed one, moved to another, returned to the first, started a different one. They grew and breathed together. We didn't have a writing period then a separate recording period.

RT: We didn't want to limit ourselves to music we were known for—around 120 BPMs filled with percussion. There's more in us, and this showed in a natural way what came out. We didn't plan a number of tracks of a specific sound. Once there are three or four tracks together, you get a feel for the life that's being created. I feel our tracks each have something to say separately, but also speak well together and of each other. ♪

Trüby Trio's Elevator Music is out now on Compost Records.  
www.compost-records.com.



**BEGG TO DIFFER**

West London's supremely talented Marcus Beggs is poised to set his soul free.

Weathered but not worn down by life's ups and downs, his beard speckled grey but his eyes sparkling, vocalist Marcus Beggs is gracious and gregarious on an otherwise overcast day in West London. Transplanted from the West Indian isle of Dominica in 1978 at the age of 10, Beggs arrived in the traditionally black West London community of Notting Hill Gate back when, as he puts it, "Saying you were from Ladbroke Grove got a gasp, and saying you were from around Portobello road was a swear. You might as well have pulled a gun and said give me the money now."

Though he's performed live from childhood through the acid house, drum & bass and broken beat movements, Beggs caught the Trüby Trio's ears via his featured turns as Ne-Grove on "Jaded" and "Let It Ride," two late-'90s singles of swing-and-stomp, jazz-funk-house fusion released on West London's Pure Filth Recordings. His long-distance contributions to *Elevator Music*—"Universal Love" and "Lover Uncovered"—readily reflect the bond over Cameo, Ingram Brothers and Brass Construction that Beggs and the boys established upon first meeting in Munich. "[It worked] because I didn't feel overdirected," Beggs notes. "You can't sanitize [that raw emotion] in the studio. You have to let it strut and stretch on its own."

Following his original muse (which was first sparked by a late-'80s Prince concert he saw), Beggs plans to apply his self-taught guitar and piano training to record a solo album that he aims to counter the direction of American r&b, which he says might as well mean "repetitious & boring." Beggs also coaches soccer, mentors in underprivileged areas, and records with folks like Pure Filth head honch Leroy Smith and drum & bass head Cyantific.

purefilthrecords@onetel.net.uk

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Born in Nigeria, bred both there and in the UK, and now based in New York, singer/dancer/designer Wunmi is definitely cut of a different cloth. First unveiled to the world as the braided dervish and image designer of London's Soul II Soul, Wunmi has since received continued transatlantic acclaim by lending her voice to the likes of Masters at Work, Bugz in the Attic, King Britt and, of course, Trüby Trio. Her talents—born as the defense mechanisms and cries of independence of a young girl caught between cultures, and developed from South London to jazz- and Afrobeat-fueled jams down on St. Marks—has become a strongly woven bundle, a Technicolor dreamcoat of a career.

Wunmi moved to New York to explore her literal creative voice and escape the London naysayers who knew her only from her dancing. First introduced to the Trüby Trio's Roland Appel and Christian Prommer (as well as other Compost Records artists) several years ago at Miami's Winter Music Conference, Wunmi immediately felt comfortable with the continental European posse's worldly enthusiasm. A collaboration seemed inevitable, so when Trüby Trio set about recording *Elevator Music*, Wunmi enthusiastically flew to Munich to add her scat-derived lyrics. Her style, a kind of spontaneous storytelling that echoes the rhythm of a dancer's short, staggered breaths, complements kinetic album tracks like "Runnin'" and "Make a Move."

"To sew a garment, you have to believe in the cut," says Wunmi, her strong gaze supporting her belief in her home-sewn ideologies. "If you question the cut, you'll just keep cutting and cutting. So I just gave Trüby Trio what I was feeling, they didn't question it, and it turned into a beautiful design."

[www.wunmi.com](http://www.wunmi.com)

# SEE/STRESS

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MUSIC  
ANOMALY,  
KIERAN  
HEBDAN'S  
FOUR TET  
PROJECT  
CONGEALS  
ORGANIC &  
SYNTHETIC  
INSTRUMENTS  
INTO A  
CALM,  
UNCLUTTERED  
SOUND.  
WHO KNEW  
A DAWNSON'S  
CREEK FAN  
COULD BE  
THIS SUBLIME?

WORDS  
IMAGES  
CHRISTINE HSIEH  
DAVID AXELBANK

≡ Lurking underneath the surface of Londoner Kieran Hebdan's measured calm and soft-spoken demeanor is the spirit of an ass-shaking hip-hop superstar. Seriously.

The 20-something Hebdan has the necessary credentials of any indie-electronic boy wonder. Take, for instance, his early success as a member of post-rock trio Fridge, which Hebdan started with assorted teenage pals. But don't even try to fit him into any subcultural mold. He's got a soft spot—or perhaps merely a strange fascination—for American pop culture, a side of him that's not particularly apparent in his sensitive, introspective and delicately textured music. Hebdan's latest effort for Domino Records, *Rounds*, takes off on the path carved out by 2001's lovely debut *Pause*, but veers toward more adventurous territory. His signature lilting melodies, tender acoustic guitars and assorted electronic bumbles and bleeps are all present, but this time they're wrapped around deconstructed beats, or left to hang in uncertain—yet supremely touching—musical space. Not exactly the type of thing one would expect from a fan of 50 Cent, right?

**XLR8R:** *When people talk to you about your music, they throw out words like "organic" and "folky." Does that reflect your lifestyle at all?*

**Kieran Hebdan:** I'm not an organic vegetarian kind of guy. I'm not a beer-brawling type of guy, either. I think music definitely reflects my personality a bit. I think the melodies on the records, rather than the actual sounds, are the soundtrack to my lifestyle. I think the sounds I've chosen have to do with a combination of both my tastes and ideas that I had about what would be interesting instrumentation to



use on a record nowadays. The Brandy and Monica song, "The Boy Is Mine," had a harp on it. Making a harp the lead instrument on a chart hit [makes me] want to be braver about my use of sounds.

**XLR8R:** *Everyone's always looking for the next big thing, musically speaking. What's your pick?*

**KH:** I think it's 50 Cent all the way. I hear he's massive in America, and he's massive here as well. I remember when Missy Elliot's "Get Ur Freak On" came out and [in] every single car driving around London that summer, that's all you'd hear coming out the window! And I just know over the next three or four months the 50 Cent single (the Dr. Dre one) will be in every single car for ages and ages.

**XLR8R:** *Will you be playing that in yours?*

**KH:** Yeah, I've probably played it about 30 times already. I think it's absolutely amazing. Really, really, really good.

**XLR8R:** *Would you ever want to meet him? Or are you content to be a fan?*

**KH:** Yeah, I can't imagine we'd have very much in common. I don't think he'd be that excited about meeting me. It's only exciting to me to meet musicians I'm really interested in, or would potentially have a really interesting conversation with. But to just meet them and go, "Hi..."

**XLR8R:** *So what does your hair look like these days? Maybe the right hairstyle will get you in the door. Like cornrows.*

**KH:** I just had it cut literally like a week or so ago. It was getting really sort of long and manic. I looked a bit like a microphone, basically. Sort of tall and skinny with a huge round head. My mum said I looked a bit like one of the Jackson 5 in one of my press photos.

**XLR8R:** *Maybe that'll be the ticket to Hollywood. Who would play you in the movie of your life?*

**KH:** I love *Dawson's Creek* more than anything, so I'd go for Dawson. That would be really, really cool. I couldn't imagine anything more bizarre.

**XLR8R:** *Do you watch Dawson's every week?*

**KH:** Yeah. But the new season has been horrendously bad. I have to download



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them off the internet to see them. I was watching them in America when I was on tour, and then I get over here and we're like a year behind. Ugh!

**XLR8R:** *Would you ever guest star on the show?*

**KH:** Definitely. I'd want them to come up with something fantastic. I wouldn't want to interfere with the writers' genius. I don't think too much about personally being involved with *Dawson's Creek*, though. It's part of the fun, watching them from a distance, really. So upsetting the balance between them—I think it would just upset me, generally. Joey's attractive and all, and it would be nice to make out with her, but if that's part of the story, I could potentially upset Dawson, and I wouldn't really want to mess with him at all.

**XLR8R:** *Speaking of performances, when you perform live, what kind of feeling do you try to create?*

**KH:** When you do live music, it's only going to last for an hour. You're capturing a moment, really, rather than doing something people can play again and again and again and kind of sit with. I take loads of melodies and ideas and stuff from the records, and I push them and make them more and more obscure. One of my main influences on all the time is all the spiritual free jazz stuff from the late-'60s early-'70s, like Sun Ra and stuff. I think I've always tried to include not necessarily the sounds those artists make, but the atmosphere of the records and things. The stuff I'm doing live at the moment, I want to add an element of fierce improvisation as well.

**XLR8R:** *So, in addition to improvisation, what other themes informed your creative process on Rounds?*

**KH:** The previous one had a very set-out idea, whereas this one, I guess the main idea was to take all the things I was happiest with in *Pause* and push them as much as possible. I wanted to do something that was more challenging in some ways, but more accessible at the same time. I wanted to make a record that was completely different from what came out this year. But I didn't want to alienate anyone. I wanted to embrace people more. ♪

*Four Tet's Rounds is out now on Domino Recordings. [www.dominorecords.com](http://www.dominorecords.com).*



# SOUL

# DIGGING

THEY MAY NOT KNOW HER NAME, BUT DISCERNING MUSIC FANS WITH RECORDS BY INCOGNITO, GALLIANO, JAZZANOVA, RESTLESS SOUL, 4HERO, PESHAY, DOMU AND TWO BANKS OF FOUR IN THEIR STACKS ENJOY THE NATURALLY EBULLIENT VOCALS OF SINGER AND SONGWRITER VALERIE ETIENNE MORE OFTEN THAN THEY REALIZE. NO MERE SESSION SINGER, THIS BRAND-NEW MOM SUPPLIES HERSELF AND OTHERS WITH A RICH STYLE OF UK SOUL THAT REACHES BEYOND THE EVER-MUTATING FLAVORS OF INNOVATIVE BRITISH URBAN SOUNDS.

WORDS TAMARA PALMER IMAGES DAVID AXELBANK



Surviving in the mainstream American music business means you gotta be bad, you gotta be bold, you gotta be wiser. But if you really wanna play with the majors, you gotta be whatever the hell they want you to be, no matter your own vision. London soul singer Valerie Etienne learned this lesson in the mid-'90s, when the then-monolithic, now ruined Geffen Records empire courted her.

Geffen wanted her to be Des'ree, another British export who had just broken into the elusive US charts with her adult-oriented inspirational pop-r&b ditty, "You Gotta Be." But Valerie wasn't having it—she wasn't about to be someone else in order to get exposure in the US. She might as well have left those negotiations with another popular tune ringing in her head: "I Gotta Be Me."

In the end, Des'ree hasn't fared that well nearly a decade later. Meanwhile Valerie Etienne continues to make her way successfully as she has for the past 15 years, by working and breathing music—not the music *business*—and being herself. So who gives a flying fuck about conquering the

# 4 REAL

American music business (or any old-world model for "musical success") when you're successfully following your inner destiny without it?

Those who gobble music like junk food probably have little notion of artists who love to perform regardless of whether they sell multiple millions or are sprawled out in fashion magazines. They're the ones who make a happy living by staying focused on the art of music while maintaining the reins of control. "All my singing ambitions have been realized," a beaming Etienne says from her London home. "I've made an album, I've performed in front of thousands of people, I've done the tours. I feel quite content that I've made quite a good career out of it!"

Etienne has the statuesque beauty, the versatile vocal range and professional attitude to become a star in the US—she just lacks a sense of compromise. But trust: she'd have it no other way. Instead, Etienne's successfully made a life-long living by honing her natural gifts of singing and writing.

Her credits stagger beyond the margins of this story, and read like a trainspotter's wet dream. She joined the seminal Talkin' Loud acid jazz band Galliano in time for their second album, sang with them for their remaining three, and did six years as their only permanent female member. She currently records and performs with nu-



"WHEN I WRITE FOR MYSELF, IT'S LIKE UNWRENCHING BLOOD FROM A STONE"





THE BEST SONGS I'VE WRITTEN HAVE TAKEN A WHILE TO WORK THROUGH. I SPEND AGES ON THE ESSENCE OF THE TUNE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE BEST SONG I EVER WROTE CAME OUT IN ABOUT FIVE MINUTES, SO THERE YOU GO! BUT IT'S GREAT WHEN THESE ARTISTS LET ME BE ME.

the MC now known as Earl Zinger).

But she's not resting for long. There's the July performance of Two Banks of Four at the Montreaux Jazz Festival to get ready for, the show that's coming about a month after Valerie gives birth. The baby's going on the road too, better believe, because there's simply no time to stop the music of life. The same holds true for all the genres, flavors, styles, vibes of vital British urban culture. Valerie considers herself fortunate to have been along for the ride through so many exciting mutations, from acid jazz to nu-jazz, and drum & bass to soulful house.

"I think it's very indicative of British culture to try to do something that's new and a reaction to the mainstream," Etienne analyzes. "I think we have a lot of that in Britain—there's always music that is innovative and interesting and trying to get new sounds. All this broken beat, nu-jazz, drum & bass, jungle, all these very British things. Just taking elements of jazz or soul or whatever and blending it up and making their own shit. And in a way it's [due to] a lack of money and facilities, so you make up your own little studios and you come up with weird little sounds that are really raw and basic, and it brings up all this kind of experimentation. That's what I get out of it: people experiment and it turns into something else. It's a constant, evolving thing."

song I ever wrote came out in about five minutes, so there you go! But it's great when these artists let me be me."

Etienne released her debut solo album, *Misunderstanding*, in 1999 via Clean Up (a subsidiary of One Little Indian, Björk's UK label), and is currently without a label deal for the future, due in part to dissatisfaction with how that project was promoted. She has the main workings of a new album, and after she spends some time with her new baby, she'll eventually turn her thoughts to finding the album a home and doing more work. She says she'd love to do some more work on it with Jazzanova, one of her favorite collaborators in recent years, but she hasn't yet approached them about it.

Etienne adores singing live and performing above all, and recently completed a 15-month tour as a backing singer for Jamiroquai. She got off the road in time to get ready for the summer birth of her first baby, with longtime musical and personal collaborator Rob Gallagher, the driving force behind Galliano and Two Banks of Four (and

jazz-steppers Two Banks of Four, and in the past four years has written songs with and for Jazzanova ("Mwela Mwela"), Peshay ("Summer in the City"), Domu ("Up + Down") and Restless Soul ("Beautiful"), among others.

You might assume that doing guest vocals for DJ/producers of this calibre simply entails being a session singer who can croon on cue (which Etienne was as a teenager). But Etienne actually *wrote* the songs for these artists, a task she finds slightly easier than writing for herself.

"When I write for myself, it's like wrenching blood from a stone, and I go over it and over it and over it," she says. "But if I'm writing for somebody else, in a way I can sort of divorce myself. I think I become a different person, I suppose. When you write for someone else [you tend to] go with your first idea. You keep that idea and develop it, whereas I'm much more harsh on my own judgments. The best songs I've written have taken a while to work through. I spend ages on the essence of the tune. On the other hand, *the* best

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“SOME SONGS WERE SINGY AND INDIE-ROCKY”

# OF MICE AND

WITH HEART STITCHED PROUDLY TO SLEEVE, BUBBLE CORE RECORDS HEAD HONCHO AND MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST ADAM PIERCE CUTS UP GENRES LIKE THE IRON CHEF OF INDIE ELECTRONICA. THOUGH HE'S OPERATED BELOW THE RADAR FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, HE'S ABOUT TO TURN SOME HEADS WITH HIS FIFTH ALBUM AS MICE PARADE. WORDS GARRETT KAMPS IMAGES MICHAEL SCHMELLING



## A SOUND FOUND

When I first saw Adam Pierce in action back in June of 1999 at New York City's Knitting Factory, he didn't strike me as a visionary. Alongside a band he'd assembled to play songs off of his bedroom-recorded albums as Mice Parade, the multi-instrumentalist fumbled through the complex pieces as the half-dozen musicians playing vibes, samplers, two drum kits and guitars tried to keep up. It was sort of a mess.

Four years later, Pierce has his shit together. He's founded Bubble Core Records, through which he both distributes labels like Fat Cat, Leaf and Sub Rosa, and releases material by Nobukazu Takemura and HiM. He's an active member of HiM and the Swirlies, and has played drums on tour with Icelandic pop experimentalists Múm. Perhaps most importantly, he's the guy behind Mice Parade, a project that over the past five years has repeatedly exploded the possibilities for music in a post-indie, post-IDM, post-post-rock landscape.

Mice Parade was never supposed to exist. Almost a decade ago, Pierce was honing his indie rock chops playing drums in the Swirlies and the Dylan Group. He was also working at Caroline Records, running his then-fledgling Bubble Core label, and finishing up college. Somehow, amidst all that, he was recording dozens of songs in his spare time.

"Some songs were singy and indie-rocky," says Pierce. "And some songs were clearly mimicking this new [intelligent dance music]—I don't think they called it IDM in '95—this melodic, indie electronica, post-Aphex Twin shit."

Back then, terms like "glitch-hop" were just glimmers in a few journalists' eyes, and

record labels like Morr Music and Plug Research had yet to stake their claim on the now rapidly emerging genre some like to call indie electronica.

"I was working at Caroline and I'd seen the crap that was out there," says Pierce. "And I thought, I don't need to go making a solo [indie rock] album...then I thought, whatever, I'd just put the [demo songs I was working on] out."

## IS IT INDIE?

Thus was born Pierce's debut album as Mice Parade (the name is an anagram of "Adam Pierce"). Released in 1998, *The True Meaning of Boodleybaye* infused the plaintive, over-wrought ethos of indie rock into an album that would be labeled electronica by record stores and journalists, despite the fact that there wasn't a drum machine or a sequenced beat on it. Pierce was essentially recreating the effect of a sequencer but with live instruments: he layered melodic patterns like color swatches, doubled up drum beats on top







of one another, and replaced synth arpeggios with vibraphones. Tracks that would have sounded sterile had they been digitally processed like most ambient-leaning electronica of the day now pulsed with emotion. Pierce recorded his follow-up, 1999's *Ramda*, in much the same fashion.

For Mice Parade's third record, Pierce switched things up a bit. Calling on his extensive world travels—which exposed him to Spanish flamenco music, Brazilian capoeira culture, African pygmy jams and countless other influences—he created *Mokoondi*. With elements like the cheng (Chinese harp), dulcimers, vibraphones, Fender Rhodes, marimbas, gamelan, synths, gourds, the cymbalom and some spastic drumming that would startle Billy Cobham, *Mokoondi* sounds like a Euro-Asian jam band weaned on post-rock and Afrobeat. Pierce later expanded on the resulting compositions live on a world tour with a group of six musicians, and collected those sessions for *All Roads Lead to Salzburg*, Mice Parade's fourth album.

"I'm using flamenco guitar strumming techniques on the cheng," says Pierce, exemplifying *Mokoondi*'s alchemical quality. "There's a fusion. People shy away from the word 'fusion' these days...but, you know, it doesn't only mean Herbie Hancock in the '70s."

### THE WORLD IS HIS

Now Pierce is hard at work on Mice Parade's fifth release, *Obrigado Saudade*. "Obrigado means thanks you [in Portuguese]," he explains from his home studio in Mount Vernon, NY, in between recording consultations with Múm's Kristin Anna Valtysdóttir, who sings on some of the new songs. "'Saudade' doesn't translate directly into English. Some places will tell you 'nostalgia,' some places will tell you 'homesick,' some places will tell you 'lovesick.'"

Perhaps for Pierce, it's a little bit of each. As the genesis of Mice Parade, ...*Boodybye* captured his spirit best. While the tracks on subsequent records were stimulating explorations in genre and style, they didn't break your heart like some of the first album's more tender moments. With *Obrigado Saudade*, however, Pierce has found his way back home, and he's brought years of experience with him.

"IT'S NOT A FULL BAND MAKING A RECORD—IT'S ME IN MY BASEMENT."

"It's a return to form for me," he says. "It's not a full band making a record—it's me in my basement." Indie electronica is about finding new ways to serve up the raw, perhaps even juvenile emotional disposition of indie music in a less didactic way. Whether it's through Dntel's glitch-ridden pop or Mice Parade's homogenization of everything from Aphex Twin to Fela Kuti, the genre has defined itself not so much by the sound of the music, but by the feeling beneath it. Pierce has made a name for himself by perpetuating that feeling, whether it's through a Chinese harp, a drum beat in 11/4 time, or simply by putting out other people's amazing records. That feeling may not be easy to pinpoint, but it's certainly hard to ignore.✂

[www.bubblecore.com](http://www.bubblecore.com)

#### INSTRUMENTAL PROCEDURES

One of the things that enriches Pierce's music so much is his use of rather unorthodox instruments. The cymbalom, the cheng, the cajon, the gamelan—what the hell are these things? Pierce was happy to explain.

**The Cymbalom** "One of my favorites... it has either two or three strings for each note. When the strings of one note finally come into perfect tune with each other, the cymbalom lets you know, as a huge bass harmonic suddenly resonates over everything and makes your stomach drop. Fun stuff."

**The Cheng/Koto** "It has 18 strings and use the pentatonic scale, meaning it has only five different notes. Writing melodies with limited notes forces you to connect the notes with emotions in a completely different way."

**The Cajon** "A flamenco box drum that my ex-girlfriend gave to me. It looks like a rectangle with a hole in one side, but the opposite side—the one you hit with your hands—is a slab of really thin wood that's held on by a screw system. Flamenco percussion instruments share this rough, toneless quality with their Moorish predecessors, and I think the fluttering feel is amazing."

**The Gamelan** "Comes from Java...the gamelan scales are lively, perhaps a bit 'out of tune' to our [Western] ears. Each gamelan maker has his own variations. The one I have has two notes that are two cents apart from each other. A cent is 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a half-step, and a half-step is two notes next to each other on a piano—in other words, [a cent is] an inaudible interval."

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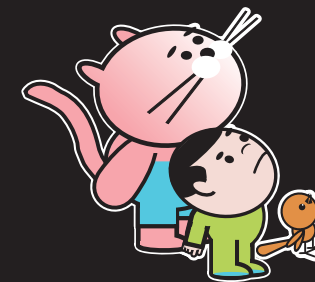
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## INFINITE LIVEZ

Known for his surreal rhymes, current Shadowless crew member Steven Henry is responsible for the recent Big Dada single "Emceeme," and two tracks ("Niceness" and "No More Bananas") for the *Extra Yard* compilation. Livez first got his gab on as a marginally successful '80s TV presenter who quickly grew bored with empty and monotonous routine. He teamed up with underground producer Pete Waterman in 1984 to make the dancehall classic "Rat Rappin." Since then, he says, "It's been money, drugs and cheese-flavored condoms for all my big-eared bitches...yeaaaaah!"

**Bouncement Is:** Music that white people can dance to without reminding you of the futility of mankind's existence.

**Bouncement Before Time:** "Sing Along With Max Bygraves (Brandon Block Remix)."

**Fashion Statement:** To be truly "smenty," all you need is a G-string, a pair of espadrilles and a pocket sized picture of Joey Deacon.

**Wheels:** A black taxi, in which I drive around and charge unsuspecting American tourists exorbitant amounts to be taken to "Buckinghamshire Palace."

**Special Weapon:** Anthrax, ricin and various weapons of mass destruction I bought from a cash-and-carry in Stepney Green.

**Bouncement Rating:** Any rating system based on bouncement can only really take place between the numbers.

Therefore I'd feel more comfortable comparing myself to issue 43 of *Asian Babes* and a packet of Pork Scratchings.

WHAT'S THAT MASHED-UP BREW OF DANCE-HALL, R&B, HIP-HOP, 2-STEP AND OTHER LOW-END SOUNDS FROM THE CULTURAL MELTING POT OF SOUTH LONDON? IT'S BOUNCEMENT, THE NEW VIBRATION OF THE BIG DADA RECORDS CREW.

WORDS STEVE NICKOLLS IMAGES TOM OLDHAM

Birmingham bad-boy Mike Skinner's UK garage-rap project The Streets may allegedly be the sound of, err, "the streets," but that ain't the map that Brixton-based label Big Dada Records' artist roster is reading from. You wanna know what's really rocking the UK streets? The bouncement sounds of Big Dada, that's what. And it's beyond just music—bouncement is a lifestyle and an attitude, if not approaching a religion.

The term "bouncement" combines the "bounce" of all forms of bass-driven urban music and "bashment," the Jamaican slang term for a dancehall party. South London has always been a crossroads for reggae, hip-hop and more recently jungle and 2-step sound

system culture. Bouncement is natural fusion of all of the above with Brixton's fertile underground club circuit its proving ground. If you're bouncing with your crew to some *rude* bass tunes at the basement bashment 'round the corner, you're digging the bouncement scene, *seen?*

The crew making the most noise with this new hybrid of everything urban and ill is the six-year-old Big Dada. Not content with already being one of the most adventurous hip-hop labels on the planet, Big Dada have charted new solar systems while taking street rap in far-flung directions. The label's recent compilation, *Extra Yard*, has proven to be their formidable mission

statement—or is it their *dash-up* statement?

Big Dada's crew includes New Yorker Mike Ladd's Majesticons, along with British-based artists Ty, Gamma, Infinite Livez, Lotek Hifi and King Geedra, all of whom have fresh releases dropping this year. What will they sound like? Imagine Beenie Man, Marvin Gaye, LFO, Lee Perry, Dillinja, William Burroughs, Timbaland and DJ Premier sitting around making beats, smoking weed and talking shit. Bouncement is all that and some stuff that's still being invented on the fly. Here are some words of wisdom from some of the Big Dada players.

Bounce to this.👊





## BLACKITUDE

C. Sancho is Blackitude, a.k.a. Eebzookee, a.k.a. Robotic EBU. He was a major player on *Extra Yard*, contributing to no less than five tracks, and is also part of the Gamma crew, whose *Permanent* album on Big Dada from 2000 was way ahead its time, and thus slept on. Don't tell anyone—but he knows how to hold a mic and knock a couple beats up all at the same time.

**Bouncement Is:** Some next hip-hop. We're just making hip-hop from our perspective. And we expect people to recognize and bounce to it. In a nutshell, it's a bit bouncy and a bit bashy. Don't ask for a translation—all your Jamaican readership will understand.

**Bouncement Before Time:** "One Step Beyond" by Prince Buster.

**Fashion Statement:** You're taking this way too seriously. Just listen to the music and stop asking silly questions.

**Wheels:** I drive a Lancia, and this says I'm rare and exclusive, and makes people ask the question, "What the fuck is that?"

**Special Weapon:** Exceeding everyone's expectations.

**Bouncement Rating:** 11



## LOTEK HIFI

Lotek is producer, vocalist, engineer, remixer and Big Dada studio-master Wayne Bennett. He's made tracks for Roots Manuva's two albums, and will soon come to the frontline with his *Mixed Blessings* album and a live band.

**Bouncement Is:** The world, man! Bouncement is my *doggy!*

**Bouncement Before Time:** Brandenburg Concerto 3 in G Minor by J.S. Bach.

**Fashion Statement:** Lolo balls and pogo sticks.

**Wheels:** Scalextric F1. I'm always going round in circles.

**Special Weapon:** Top Secret Super Scientific Sonic Something Or Other.

**Bouncement Rating:** Approx. 8.9438 (correct to 4 decimal places).



**▶ THE BIGGEST BIG DADDY**

And finally *end*troducing the shadowy figure behind it all, Will Ashon, founder of Big Dada and born with a "what's fresh" radar in his head. Ashton went to Ninja Tune's label heads back in '97 and proposed that they "revolutionize hip-hop or die trying!" Or something like that. Ashton is now the man with the plan, the driver of the Bouncement Bus, the Big Dada himself.

**Bouncement Is:** It's hip-hop, bounce, bashment, UK soundsystem culture, 2-step, whatever. It's here to stay, whatever people want to call it.

**Is it just a clever ruse to re-brand UK hip-hop?** Yes and no, and no. It's a ruse in that we [had to create a term so that listeners would] think about some of the stuff [that's] called UK hip-hop in a different way. And that's the people who make the music as well as the people who (don't) buy it. And, no, it's also *not* a ruse, 'cos if it was clever, you wouldn't have noticed. It's not a ruse [when you ask yourself,] "Is 'I Luv You' by [garage producer] Dizzie Rascal UK hip-hop? Is [UK hip-hop outfit] Bury Crew at 135 BPM 2-step? There's a whole load of black British musical trends colliding, and new exciting stuff coming out of it. I really don't give a fuck what anyone calls it. The idea was just to make people think about what they're listening to.

Extra Yard, the blueprint compilation to the bouncement scene, is out now on Big Dada records. [www.bigdada.com](http://www.bigdada.com).



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# INSECT SOUNDS

HE'S MADE NOISE WITH EARLY-'90S SLUDGE-PUNK BAND GOD, AND FREAKED-OUT DUB AND MINIMAL BEATS WITH TECHNO ANIMAL. NOW HE'S GOT A DANCEHALL AGENDA. JOIN US AS WE BUG OUT WITH UNDERGROUND ICON KEVIN MARTIN A.K.A. THE BUG

WORDS STEVE GOODMAN IMAGE PATRICIA NIVEN

“I DIDN'T WANT TO KEEP MAKING MUSIC FOR EITHER NERDS OR MACHO ASSHOLES”

Dancehall is once again getting restless, and militant dub is fortifying its battalions. In tune with the world's shattered political landscape, dub and ragga artists are expressing anger, rage and protest with a flurry of fire-burning lyrics pinned down to aggressive synthetic rhythms. In Jamaica, after a lull in gun-related tunes in the mid- and late-'90s, a socially conscious thug voice is now speaking out (check recent tracks by Sizzla, Bounty Killer and Cobra). In Europe and England, the tension is simmering more covertly, in the backing tracks—the riddims—of an array of electronic producers.

Previously known for his seminal underground music projects Techno Animal, Ice and God, London's Kevin Martin has gathered a squad of dancehall-inflected vocalists for a new project under the alias The Bug. Together, the crew have spawned an album of urban audio mutations. With the recent simultaneous release of his album *Pressure* on both the UK's disparate Replex label and America's Tigerbeat6, Martin in his Bug guise has cooked up a downtempo, overdriven yard-core monster that Martin describes as “warped ragga meets heavy electronic dub.”

But how did the Bug catch the bashment bug?

“The innovations that came through reggae have indelibly marked me,” Martin notes with a sense of awe. “I feel like my internal DNA was reformatted after getting more and more obliterated by sound systems, like going to Iration Steppas in warehouses in the East End of London. It was mind-blowing as far as I was concerned, even though I think a lot of the records were shite—a lot of that digidub steppas scene, for me, didn't really cut it on record. But live, it was astonishing.”

Martin's first Bug album, *The Conversation* on New York's Wordsound label, reinterpreted the seminal Francis Ford Coppola/Walter Murch audio-forensic cinema classic of the same name. “I thought [the Bug project] would be a one-off at the time. I became fascinated by the movie [conceptually], and I thought that the sound design was absolutely astonishing. So I was trying to translate the themes of the movie through music. I guess it was my way of trying to begin locating a solo voice. Everything I had done prior to that had been very much down to collaborative endeavors, which I love as well.”

Such origins couldn't predict the Bug generating his ragga sound through the conventional bashment channels. “In many ways, it's totally illogical for me to end up in dancehall,” says Martin. “I spent my teenage years on the south coast of England. I can't even remember seeing a black person there. It's been a snowballing effect for me. In the mid-1990s I became interested enough to [start buying the

records] second-hand, but I didn't know anyone else who was into it. I just enjoyed the off-the-wall nature of [dancehall], and was fighting my own prejudices against synthetic sounds, and the plasticity and cheesiness of it.

“So it's just become more and more of an obsession with me. There's a brute physicality [in the music] that I love. It's pretty anarchic in the sounds that it incorporates and in its structures. To me, the reggae, roots, dub and dancehall sound is always forward-looking and progressive, whereas I find most white music culture regressive. I think ragga is the ultimate extension of this.”

On *Pressure*, most of the overdriven tracks distort dancehall's traditional boom-boom-clack, but with a subtlety and diversity untypical of the average noise terrorist. Tracks featuring dub poet Roger Robinson and Rhythm & Sound's former murmuring MC Paul St. Hilaire (previously known as Tikiman) on vox offer a sharper sonic image of new-school dub as compared to R & S's “loud-quiet” digital approach to reggae. Rougher tunes voiced by world's fastest MC Daddy Freddy, gravel-throated rhymer He-Man and New Flesh's microphone-man Toastie Taylor clobber you with blunt riddims that display all the vigor of robofunk and techstep drum & bass.

Martin, who's garnered a rep of “runnin' red” on the volume-meter via the avant chaos of Godflesh and the noise-hop of Techno Animal, says he didn't want to keep making “music for either nerds or macho assholes. I think it's great that girls are really into the bass-driven Bug sound. The attraction of overdriven sound is that it excites the ear. It's a purely physical tool. You'll either revolt people or excite people, and the excitation is caused by distortion. So if you hear a dub sound system pummelling at the upper limits, or Elvis Presley playing rock 'n' roll through shit sound systems in the 1950s, that distortion adds to the excitement.

“When I first heard pirate radio stations it was like half hearing stuff. You hear it so distorted that it adds to its energy. In terms of [the sound of my label] Razor X and certain strains of the Bug sound, overdrive is still important. If I started a set with Razor X material, I think I could empty the crowd very quickly. But if you start with slow and low stuff, and build a set and the energy levels up, then the reaction is pretty incredible. It's fun to test those reactions out.”

Sign up then, as a yardcore guinea pig. Watch for a string of Bug releases forthcoming on Replex, including new tracks voiced by Warrior Queen. Resistance is futile.

*Pressure* is out now on Tigerbeat6. [www.tigerbeat6.com](http://www.tigerbeat6.com), [www.replex.com](http://www.replex.com).



# BRAND NEW YOU'RE RETRO

"NIRVANA" IS NOT A WORD BANDIED ABOUT MUCH IN AN AGE OF REASON AND PERPETUAL PLUG-INS, BUT FOR VINTAGE SYNTHESIZER GEARHEADS THE FASCINATION WITH ALL THINGS ANALOG SHOWS NO SIGNS OF BURNING ITS OSCILLATORS OUT ANYTIME SOON. LOFTY EBAY PRICES AND ENDLESS NEWS-GROUP THREADS ATTEST TO HOW BADLY PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE EVERYTHING OLD SOUND NEW AGAIN. FOR OTHERS, THE MERE PRESENCE OF THESE MACHINES STILL HYPNOTIZES: WITNESS DESIGNERS REPUBLIC PREACHING ABOUT THE JOYS OF OLD ROLAND TYPOGRAPHY, AND BANDS LIKE ADD N TO X ACTUALLY WEARING THE STUFF. IN TRIBUTE, XL88R PRESENTS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF VINTAGE SYNTHESIZER PICTORIALS.

COMPILED BY DAVID J WEISSBERG IMAGES ZEN SEKIZAWA  
WITH INVARIABLE ASSISTANCE FROM PAUL (AND THE REST) AT FUTURE MUSIC LOS ANGELES & SYNTHMUSEUM.COM



## UNIVOX SR-120

YEAR MADE 1976  
CURRENTLY FETCHING \$100-200

Also known as the 'Minipops-120', these early drum machines were packed in the fashionable attire the day, the walnut casing. While not the most seminal of beatboxes, Univox/Minipops were used heavily by ambient octogenarian Jean Michel Jarre and on most early Some Bizzare records releases.

USED BY FAD GADGET, DEPECHE MODE (PRE-MUTE), THE THE (BURNING BLUE SOUL), APOLLO 440



## ARP OMNI-2

YEARS PRODUCED 1977-1981  
CURRENTLY FETCHING \$100-250

Divided into three sections—synth, bass, and strings—it was primarily known for the latter. It can be heard rather distinctly on both Joy Division's "Atmosphere" and "Love will Tear Us Apart," as it was the staple keyboard of Factory Records's main producer Martin Hannett.

USED BY NEW ORDER (MOVEMENT, TEMPTATION), JOY DIVISION, ULTRAVOX, MASSIVE ATTACK, JANET JACKSON

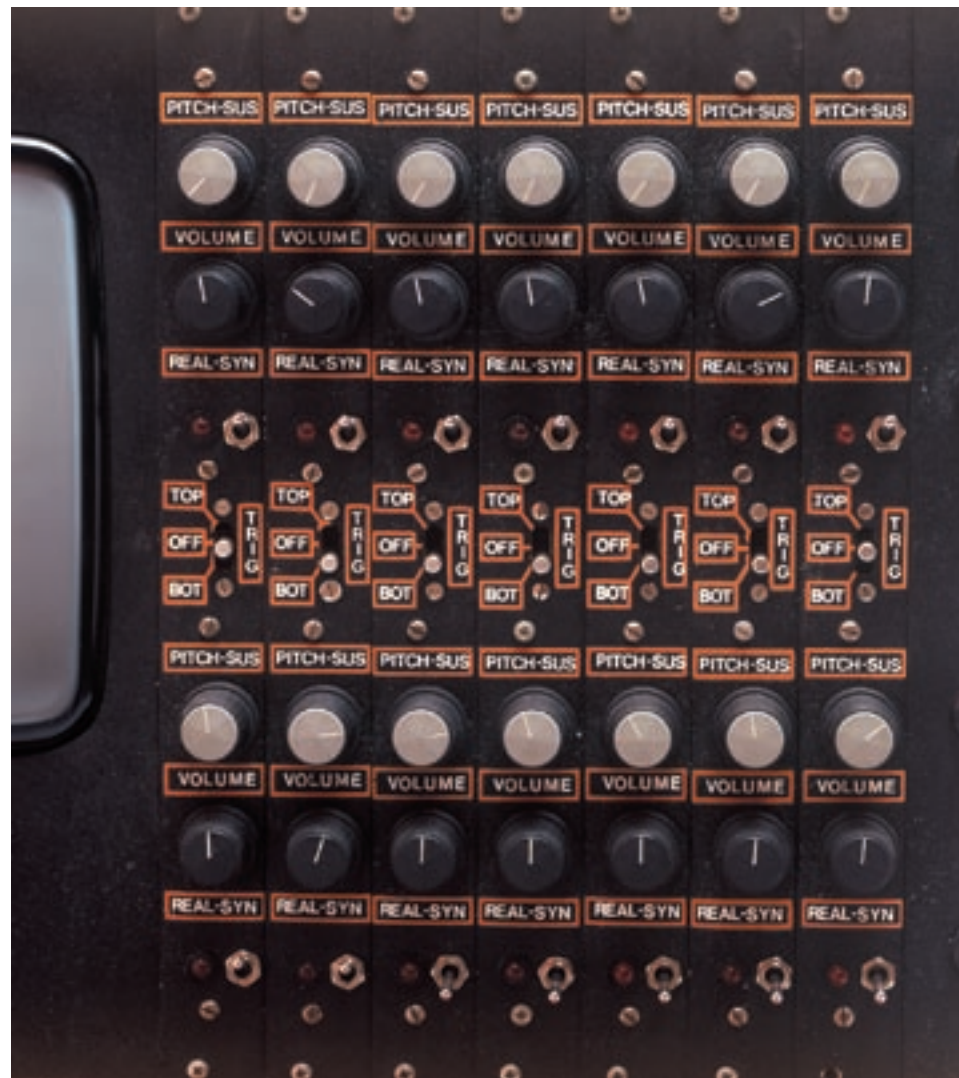




**MOVEMENT  
DRUM SYSTEM II**  
YEARS PRODUCED 1983  
CURRENTLY FETCHING \$???

This UK drum machine is about as difficult to program as it is to find, as there are only 50 reputed to be in existence. Its most unique feature is that it allows the user to switch between analog (like an 808) and digital (sampled) sound or anything in between. An early prototype of the Movement had its 15 minutes of fame amongst the cows in the Eurythmics' "Sweet Dreams" video. It also had a starring role in the song's production.

USED BY EURYTHMICS, MICK KARN, THOMPSON TWINS, THOMAS DOLBY



**ROLAND RS-09**  
YEARS PRODUCED 1983  
CURRENTLY FETCHING \$100-175

Simplicity underscores this much underrated organ/string keyboard, noted for its clean design (just look at that font!) and light-weight portability. Musically speaking, its lush strings are definitive of the 1980's new wave sound.

USED BY NEW ORDER, JIMI TENOR, THE CURE (FAITH, SEVENTEEN SECONDS), JUAN ATKINS/CYBOTRON, INFORMATION SOCIETY





### ROLAND CR-78

YEAR PRODUCED 1979  
CURRENTLY FETCHING \$350

The CompuRhythm is considered to be the first programmable drum/rhythm machine. Originally designed to accompany nightclub acts of the Vegas variety, it soon found its niche somewhere between Genesis ("In the Air Tonight") and goth ("Bela Lugosi's Dead").

Despite leaps in drum technology and ever expanding piles of drum sample discs, musicians today still love (and fork out great sums for) the CR-78.

USED BY GARY NUMAN, ROXY MUSIC, BLONDIE, ULTRAVOX (VIENNA), JOHN FOX, CABARET VOLTAIRE, DEPECHE MODE (SPEAK AND SPELL), JAH WOBBLE, 808 STATE, KOMPUTER, UNDERWORLD, LADYTRON, ADULT., NINE INCH NAILS, SKINNY PUPPY, PET SHOP BOYS, DR. WHO (TV SERIES)



### KORG POLY 800

YEARS PRODUCED 1984-87  
CURRENTLY FETCHING \$50-150

Commonly known as the "Roland Juno on a budget," its most distinguishable features are its fat bass, atmospheric strings and joystick, which allows the user to adjust both pitch and various effects.

While the Poly 800's original maestros were emerging '80s new wave bands, it was also being put to use for another emerging sound coming out of Detroit called "techno." As a credit to its timelessness, it's still affordable and as heavily used today as it was back then.

USED BY VANGELIS, ORBITAL, DEPECHE MODE, HUMAN LEAGUE, KEVIN SAUNDERSON, DERRICK MAY, JUAN ATKINS/INNER CITY, LEGOWELT, SUPER FURRY ANIMALS, L. RON HUBBARD







### ROLAND TR-808

YEAR PRODUCED 1979  
CURRENTLY FETCHING \$600-800

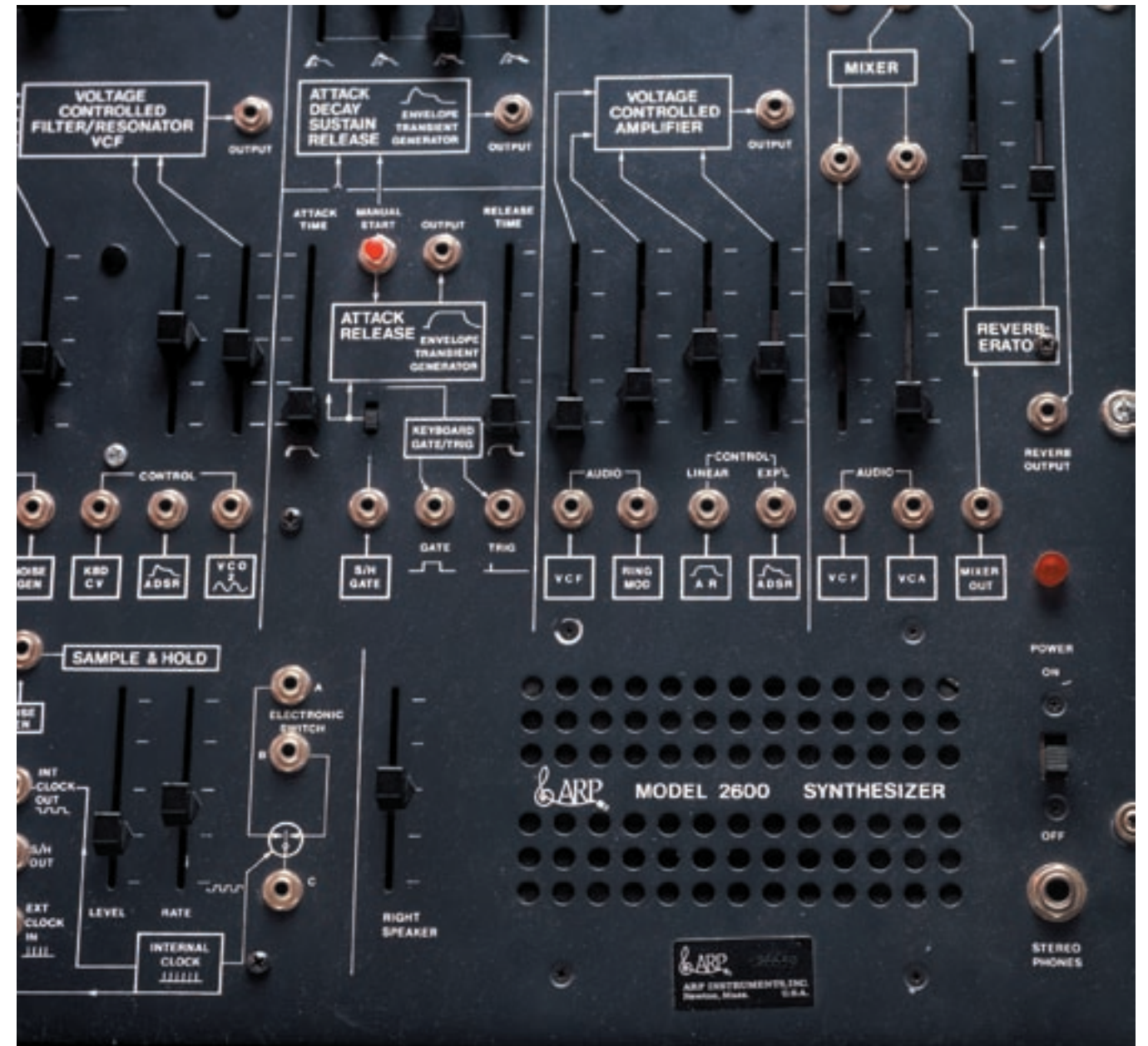
Widely considered to be the backbone of not only all forms of electronic music, but most of hip-hop as well. While it would probably be easier to write a list of bands who *haven't* used the 808, naming classics alone would still prove exhaustive.

To hear it in its most naked glory, check Afrika Bambaataa's "Planet Rock", New Order's "Confusion," Paul Hardcastle's "19," Richie Hawtin's "Spastik" and even Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing."

This baby's worshipped like a modern day clay idol amongst gearheads, and even the most passive of electronic music listeners are familiar—if not caught up in—the cult that has inspired everything from t-shirts to keychains to fan websites and even band names (i.e. 808 State)

USED BY (TO NAME BUT A FRACTION)

ARTHUR BAKER, APHEX TWIN, DR. DRE, BEASTIE BOYS, KMFDM, OPTICAL, JESSE SAUNDERS, 4 HERO, LISA LISA & THE CULT JAM, PUBLIC ENEMY, SIR MIX-A-LOT, TWO LIVE CREW, A GUY CALLED GERALD, YAZOO, THE PRODIGY, PUFF DADDY



### ARP 2600

YEARS PRODUCED 1970-1981  
CURRENTLY FETCHING \$2500-3500

While maybe not as widely known as the Roland TR-808 by the general public, it still ranks just as high in terms of overall ubiquity and respect in most musicians' books. A seemingly infinite amount of sound possibilities can be squeezed out of this box, which is controlled by "patching"—plugging wires into various inputs (similar to early phone systems). A staple piece of equipment for Mute Records honcho Daniel Miller, it can be seen lurking in the background on Depeche Mode's *Broken Frame* as well as being underfoot of Add N to X on *Metal Fingers*.

USED BY RADIOHEAD, VINCE CLARKE, JOY DIVISION (*CLOSER*), MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO, TORTOISE, DAVID HOLMES, BROADCAST, FLOOD, ANDREA PARKER (*KISS MY ARP!*), R2-D2 (*THE VOICE OF*)





# TOP SPIN

## AMERICA'S 20 BEST UNDERGROUND LABELS

### ESSENTIAL LISTENING FOR SUMMER '03 AND BEYOND

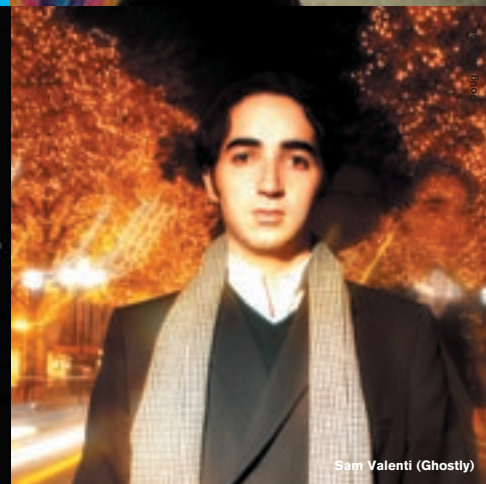
It's summertime, which means long days, warm nights, bicycle rides with boomboxes in hand and Discman-soundtracked naps on the grass in the park. So what do you listen to? We've compiled a short list of some of the best and most consistently productive labels here in the USA. We've chosen to focus on our home turf so that the world will know that we're about more than just depleted uranium bombs and lo-carb diet fads. In reading this you might wonder: Where's the jungle, the house, techno and breakbeat? Four words for you: compilations and licensed albums. These labels set themselves apart by signing x-amount of original indigenous talent instead of licensing singles or albums from elsewhere. No dodgy DJ-mixes here either—just good full-length albums for stoops 'n' booze, softball games, and bedroom dance parties for one. Read on, learn up, lean back and enjoy. *Tomas A. Palermo*



Kid606 (Tigerbeats)



Sue Costible and Josh Clayton (Orthlorng Musork)



Sam Valenti (Ghostly)



El-P (Def Jux)



Nicola Kuperus (Ersatz Audio)



Todd Hyman (Carpark)



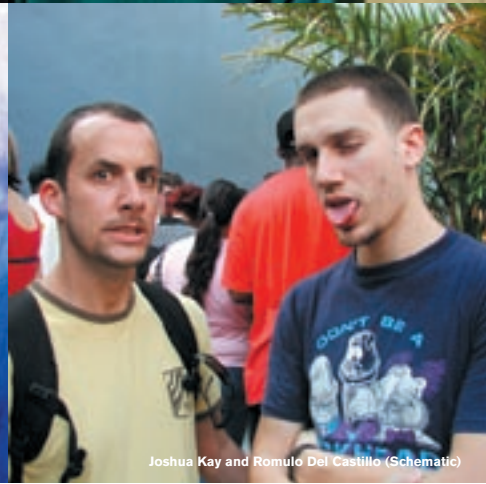
Gabe Koch (M3rck)



Tim Goldsworthy, Jonathan Galvin, and James Murphy (DFA)



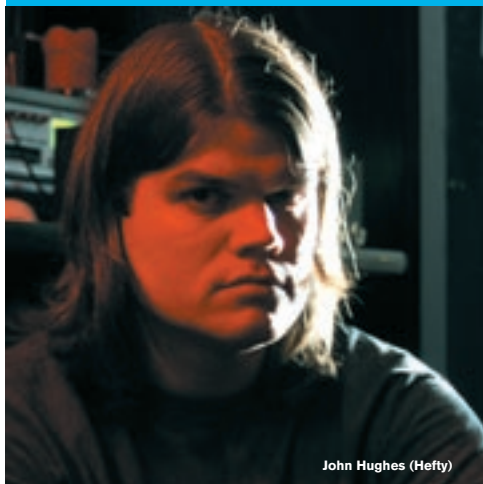
Cindy Roché and Robert Curcio (Mush)



Joshua Kay and Romulo Del Castillo (Schematic)



Scott Herresh a.k.a. Prefuse 73 (Eastern Developments)



John Hughes (Hefty)



Seven (Chocolate Industries)

### BUBBLECORE

**ARTISTS** Mice Parade, Dylan Group, HiM, Nobukazu Takemura  
**STYLES** Post-rock, post-melodic, good-mood music  
**TRIVIA** Founded in upstate NY, the crew now live in Brooklyn, baby, and distribute such cool labels as Fat Cat, Leaf, and Planet μ.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Mice Parade *All Roads Lead To Salzburg*  
[www.bubblecore.com](http://www.bubblecore.com)

### CARPARK

**ARTISTS** Dinky, Marumari, Greg Davis, Casino Vs. Japan  
**STYLES** Indie-electronic, ambient  
**TRIVIA** Not content to run just one label, Carpark is now home to two subs: Acute (reissues of early NY noise/no wave artists Glenn Branca and Theoretical Girls) and Paw Tracks (home to the NY's new school of noise/no wave artists Animal Collective).  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Signer *Low Light Dreams*  
[www.carparkrecords.com](http://www.carparkrecords.com)

### CHOCOLATE INDUSTRIES

**ARTISTS** Push Button Objects, Caural, Diverse, Via Tania  
**STYLES** Hip-hop, turntablism, IDM  
**TRIVIA** The label works with many *XLR8R*-endorsed visual artists—including Evan Hecox, Kaws, Graphic Havoc and Struggle Inc—and explores America's complex musical as well as socio-political milieu.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** *The Urban Renewal Program* compilation  
[www.chocolateindustries.net](http://www.chocolateindustries.net)

### DEF JUX

**ARTISTS** El-P, Cannibal Ox, Mr. Lif, Murs  
**STYLES** Hip-hop, instrumental beats  
**TRIVIA** Recent signee S.A. Smash is the drunkest new artist on the roster, like Ol' Dirty Bastard doing Dirty South bounce.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** RJD2 *Dead Ringer*  
[www.definitivejux.net](http://www.definitivejux.net)

### DFA

**ARTISTS** The Rapture, LCD Soundsystem, Black Dice  
**STYLES** No-wave, house, punk-disco, electro-dub  
**TRIVIA** Word has it that DJs as far and wide as London's broken beat man Afonaut and Germany's electro hero DJ Hell regularly play out DFA singles.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** LCD Soundsystem "Losing My Edge" 12"  
[www.plantain.net](http://www.plantain.net)

### EMPEROR NORTON

**ARTISTS** Miss Kittin, Codec & Flexor, Money Mark, Arling & Cameron  
**STYLES** Indie, electro, downtempo, funky beats  
**TRIVIA** The label takes its name from Joshua Abraham Norton, a failed San Francisco businessman who declared himself Emperor of the United States in 1859.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Ralph Myerz and the Jack Herren Band *A Special Album*  
[www.emperornorton.com](http://www.emperornorton.com)

### ERSATZ AUDIO

**ARTISTS** Adult., Magas, Tamion  
**STYLES** Electro, synthpop  
**TRIVIA** Adult. have remixed dozens of artists, including new-wave heroes The Faint and Chicago glam rocker Bobby Conn; frontwoman Nicola Kuperus has also lent her vocal chords to Brit stars Swayzak and Death In Vegas.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Adult. *Anxiety Always*  
[www.ersatzaudio.com](http://www.ersatzaudio.com)

### GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL

**ARTISTS** Dabrye, Tad Mullinix, Matthew Dear  
**STYLES** IDM, electro, synthcore  
**TRIVIA** Dabrye and Prefuse 73 recently collaborated on tracks for each other's releases; the label has an incredible design aesthetic.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** *Idol Tryouts* compilation  
[www.ghostly.com](http://www.ghostly.com)

### HEFTY/EASTERN DEVELOPMENTS

**ARTISTS** Kopernik, Savath & Savalas, Slicker, Telefon Tel Aviv  
**STYLES** Post-rock, new music composition, experimental hip-hop  
**TRIVIA** New Hefty sub-label Aestuarium will release a series of limited-edition 7" singles by lost jazz-funk greats Joey Irving and Wayne Carter, which follow an incredible Afrobeat 12" release by Dan Boadi.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Kopernik *Kopernik*  
[www.heftyrecords.com](http://www.heftyrecords.com)

### M3RCK

**ARTISTS** Kristuit Salu, Lackcluster, Esem, EU, Brothomstates  
**STYLES** Glitch-hop, IDM, ambient  
**TRIVIA** Their artists hail from Finland, Bulgaria, Russia and Detroit, but the label is based in Florida.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Kristuit Salu Vs. Morris Nightingale *My Mines*  
[www.m3rck.net](http://www.m3rck.net)

### MUSH

**ARTISTS** Busdriver, Clue To Kalo, Boom Bip, Aesop Rock  
**STYLES** Avant garde indie hip-hop, narcotic lo-fi downtempo  
**TRIVIA** *Wire*, *Village Voice*, *URB* and *Mojo* have all heaped praises upon this label's roster; looks like weird hip-hop is here to stay.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Andrew Afram Asmar *Race To The Bottom*  
[www.dirtyloop.com](http://www.dirtyloop.com)

### ORTHLORNG MUSORK

**ARTISTS** Kit Clayton, Sutekh, Stephen Mathieu, Timeblind  
**STYLES** Black-box composition, minimalism, avant-techno  
**TRIVIA** Kit Clayton has now released a single on UK jazz-funk and reggae-reissue label Soul Jazz to much acclaim; no turntable is safe when Clayton mans the decks to play dancehall pitched up plus-10.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** AGF *Head Slash Bauch*  
[www.musork.com](http://www.musork.com)





Lateef, Gift of Gab, Lyrics Born, Xcel and DJ Shadow (Quannum)



Jody and Michael McFadden (Ubiquity)



Adam Pierce, Rob Laakso, Dylan Cristy and Scott McGovern (Bubblecore)



Bettina Richards (Thrill Jockey)



Steve Pross (Emperor Norton)



Peanut Butter Wolf (Stones Throw)

**PLANET E**

**ARTISTS** Carl Craig, Reclouse, Todd Sines, Moodyman  
**STYLES** Techno, broken beat, Detroit electronica  
**TRIVIA** Carl Craig's 1999 Paperclip People performance in San Francisco is the stuff of legends; mannequins and rare (but non-functioning) Korg synths were involved in the two-hour masterpiece of a set.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Moodyman *Silent Introduction*  
[www.planet-e.net](http://www.planet-e.net)

**PLUG RESEARCH**

**ARTISTS** Dntel, Daedelus, Low Res, Soulo  
**STYLES** IDM, folktronic, experimental  
**TRIVIA** Founded in 1994 by artist Mannequin Lung, the label is now one of the top-selling US electronic labels in Germany.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Dntel *Life Is Full of Possibilities*  
[www.plugresearch.com](http://www.plugresearch.com)

**QUANNUM**

**ARTISTS** Lyrics Born, Lifesavas, Poets of Rhythm  
**STYLES** Hip-hop, rare funk  
**TRIVIA** Label manager Isaac is a board-game fanatic who organizes monthly club nights featuring fierce Scrabble and Monopoly competitions—beats PS2 any day.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Lifesavas *Spirit In Stone* (Aug '03)  
[www.quannum.com](http://www.quannum.com)

**SCHEMATIC**

**ARTISTS** Richard Devine, Otto Von Schirach, Dino Filipe, Phoenicia  
**STYLES** Glitch, IDM, electro  
**TRIVIA** Famed partly for their eye-sanding artwork, from Designers Republic and others. Be on the lookout for new albums from Shapeshifter and Nick Forte. Plus these young men just demolished the UK version of All Tomorrow's Parties.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Otto Von Schirach *Chopped Zombie Fungus*  
[www.schematic.net](http://www.schematic.net)

**STONES THROW**

**ARTISTS** Madlib, Peanut Butter Wolf, Wild Child, Dudley Perkins  
**STYLES** Hip-hop, free-jazz beats  
**TRIVIA** The label owns a house in the LA hills that serves as studio, office and living quarters for some of the label's artists. It's also seen some of Madlib's maddest moments.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Jay Lib (Madlib and Jay Dee— Sept '03)  
[www.stonesthrow.com](http://www.stonesthrow.com)

**TEMPORARY RESIDENCE**

**ARTISTS** Cex, Sonna, Sybarite, Tarentel  
**STYLES** Indie, instrumental post-rock, experimental, ambient  
**TRIVIA** The label recently swapped coasts, moving from a remote East Coast town to the bustling music city of Portland, where label founder and Sonna member Jeremy can be found working the counter at hip vinyl boutique Jackpot Records.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Sonna *Smile And The World Smiles With You*  
[www.temporaryresidence.com](http://www.temporaryresidence.com)

**THRILL JOCKEY**

**ARTISTS** Tortoise, Califone, The Sea & Cake, Radian  
**STYLES** Post-rock, indie, electronic, new composition  
**TRIVIA** Label founder Bettina likes unusual cakes. She made a lifesize Putney analog synth cake with chocolate knobs and licorice patch cords, as well as a lifesize Fender P-bass with strings, pick, guard and all.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Radian *Rec. Extern*  
[www.thrilljockey.com](http://www.thrilljockey.com)

**TIGERBEAT6**

**ARTISTS** Kid606, The Bug, DJ/rupture, Numbers  
**STYLES** Glitch-hop, hyperdrive drum & bass, punk-dance  
**TRIVIA** Kid606 once showed up without his laptop to his own monthly club night where he was slated to play live. He DJed records at 200 BPM instead.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** DJ/rupture *Minesweeper Suite*  
[www.tigerbeat6.com](http://www.tigerbeat6.com)

**UBIQUITY**

**ARTISTS** Kirk Degiorgio, P'Taah, Greyboy, Nobody, Zero dB  
**STYLES** Jazz, broken beat, hip-hop, downtempo  
**TRIVIA** The first ever Ubiquity release (on sister label Luv N' Haight) was sold from a tiny storefront on Haight Street in San Francisco. That shop, Groove Merchant, is now owned by Cool Chris of Dis-Joint Records.  
**ESSENTIAL RELEASE** Nobody *Pacific Drift* (Sept '03)  
[www.ubiquityrecords.com](http://www.ubiquityrecords.com)

**7 HONORABLE MENTIONS**

**ASPHODEL** Dope experimental label. Check out the debut album from Broker/Dealer.  
[www.asphodel.com](http://www.asphodel.com)

**BSI** Dub from Portland and beyond. Systemwide's two albums and numerous singles are the cream of the crop.  
[www.bsi-records.com](http://www.bsi-records.com)

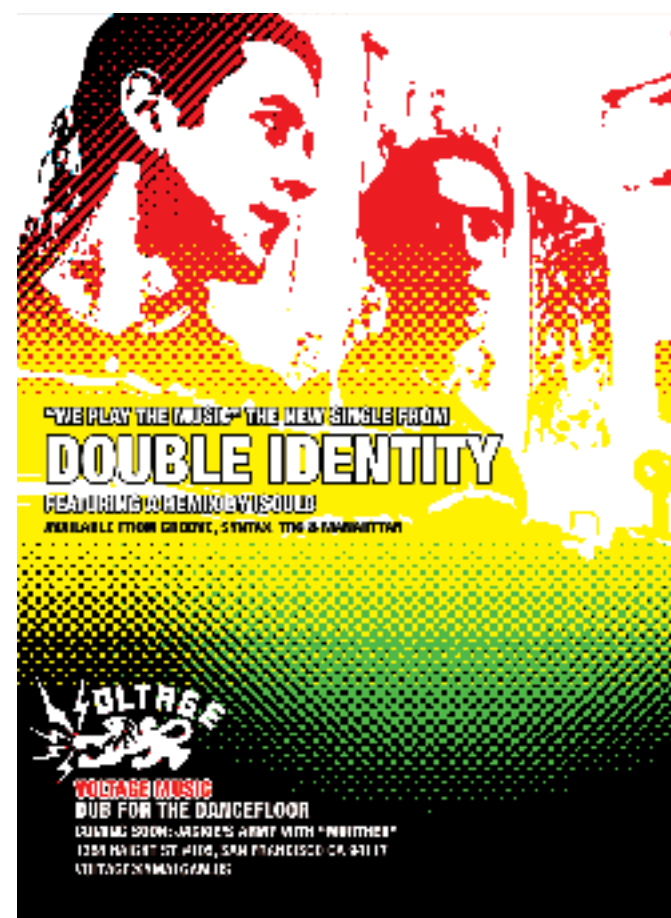
**HIEROGLYPHICS** Souls of Mischief's exemplary indie hip-hop label never fails to amaze. Check Pep Love's ingenious new release.  
[www.hieroglyphics.com](http://www.hieroglyphics.com)

**OM RECORDS** SF-based house, downtempo and broken beat label with a worldwide following. Afro-Mystik will get your feet moving.  
[www.omrecords.com](http://www.omrecords.com)

**OUTWARD MUSIC CO.** Another Portland pioneer in dreamy electronics. Nudge make nice sounds.  
[www.outwardmusic.com](http://www.outwardmusic.com)

**SPIRITUAL LIFE** New York's most diverse house imprint—for proof, check the 3 Generations Walking album.  
[www.spirituallifemusic.com](http://www.spirituallifemusic.com)

**TROUBLEMAN UNLIMITED** New York's dance-punk ground zero. Look for the new Tussle 12" soon.  
[www.troublemanunlimited.com](http://www.troublemanunlimited.com)



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**TURNT(L)ABLE**

beware the...

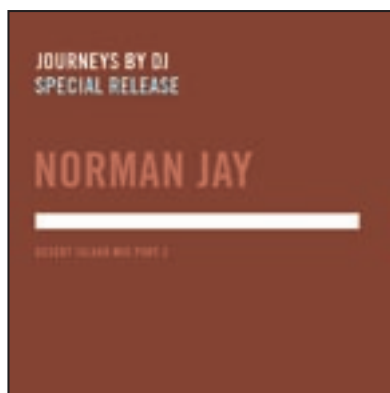




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# XL REVIEWS 06.03

### MATTHEW HERBERT BIG BAND GOODBYE SWINGTIME Accidental/UK/CD

According to Duke Ellington, it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing. Such a declamatory statement should cause no insomnia for Matthew Herbert or those involved in his latest project. From the deftly brushed snares and lissome brass section of the opening "Turning Pages," the rhythmic fluidity of Herbert's big band is both plain to the ear and plainly pertinent.

Herbert's personal beliefs are almost as well-known as his idiosyncratic working practices. Under his own name and as Doctor Rockit and Radioboy, he adheres to a rigid set of creative guidelines (laid down in his essay "Personal Contract for the Composition of Music") by which he hacks and sculpts the live audio environment into abrasive and luxuriant structures, molding the imperfect into exquisite designs and vice versa. The dogged self-sufficiency (and, frankly speaking, sheer blood-mindedness) of a methodology that eschews "the sampling of other people's music," and actively encourages "the inclusion, development, propagation, existence, replication, acknowledgement, rights, patterns and beauty of what are commonly known as accidents" points to a man gloriously at odds with the world.

However, while Radioboy's most recent outing, 2001's *The Mechanics Of Destruction*, was a rasping, grating critique of Western capitalism built from the obliteration of its most potent icons (ripped Gap boxer shorts, scrunched up Big Macs and shredded Nike sneakers),

Matthew Herbert's Big Band takes an altogether more listener-friendly, less polemic, but equally political line.

Looping samples of chattering teeth, dropped instruments, and torn newspaper—aided by a cast including pianist Phil Parnell, saxophonist Dave O'Higgins, and singers Arto Lindsay and Marla Carlyle—Herbert fuses *musique concrète* with Count Basie, using swing as both template and metaphor. Bearing in mind that the big band sound was the US and UK's most popular style of dance music in the 1930s, waning in appeal as World War II wore on, it's more than purely coincidental that this auteur-producer has chosen to update the genre as we stand, once again, in a time of conflict. This album's title offers its own resonance—seeing as 20th-century audiences' tastes shifted as war advanced, *Goodbye Swingtime* seems to signal the same loss of innocence and simplicity. Quite simply, as guest vocalist Jamie Liddell of Super\_Collider sings, "Everything's Changed."

Still, even as Dani Siciliano croons the line "not in our names" over languorous piano chords on "Chromoshop," the serious nature of these themes are balanced with the signature shuffle of Herbert's more danceable work, such as 1998's *Around The House* album.

The density and sheer jazziness of this work seems the natural conclusion of the smoky torch songs explored on 2001's *Bodily Functions*. And as a man who claims to live by Samuel Beckett's famous axiom "fail again, fail better," Herbert's fittingly coincided his finest retrofuturist hour with one of history's biggest mistakes possible. *Dave Stelfox*

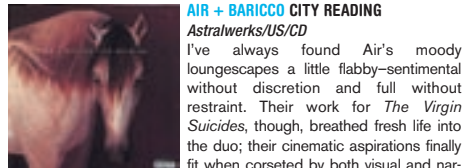




**AKROBATIK BALANCE**  
*Coup D'Etat/US/full-length*  
 Coming out of Dorchester, MA, Akrobatik has been making noise for several years now, releasing an EP and multiple singles, such as the notorious "Internet MCs" joint back in '99. On his debut full-length, *Balance*, he flaunts a smooth but strong rhyme style, addressing ever-pertinent topics like the ladies, knuckleheads and real hip-hop. Production duties are handled by Fakts One, DJ Revolution, Diamond D and Da Beatminerz, who all come nice with bump-heavy, sample-based beats. Standout tracks include the seductive funk of "Woman II," the autobiographical "Here And Now," and "Wreck Dem," a rowdy collabo with Mr. Lif. *Brolin Winning*

**8 DOOGYMOTO MINIMALISTICO**  
*Soundlike/UK/CD*

The trio called 8 Doogymoto is unlike just about any other act in electronic music, so it's not too surprising to find them on Matthew Herbert's Soundlike label. Singer Fumi's breathy vocals, sung in hybrid English and Japanese, adorn bandmates Viktor and Heinrich's chugging house structures, which bend and bow under the weight of guitars, Casios and unorthodox sound sources. 8 Doogymoto might best be compared to tropicália legend Tom Zé, whose carnivalesque avant-pomp and semi-pop set the stage for this trio's exuberant amalgamations. Contrary to its title, *Minimalistico* is joyously full of emotion and imagination, all bound together with rubber bands and masking tape: sticky, rickety and wonderfully precarious. *Philip Sherburne*



**AIR + BARICCO CITY READING**  
*Astralwerks/US/CD*  
 I've always found Air's moody loungescapes a little flabby—sentimental without discretion and full without restraint. Their work for *The Virgin Suicides*, though, breathed fresh life into the duo; their cinematic aspirations finally fit when coseted by both visual and narrative parameters. *City Readings* is Air's collaboration with Alessandro Baricco's tale of youth and grizzle, urbanity and the Wild West, and the result's a soothing hour of scene-setting and storytelling. Baricco's voice is deep and hypnotic (perhaps even more so if the only Italian word you can pick out of his reading is the oft-repeated "pistola"), while Air lays on the pretty, fuzzy atmospherics. *Selena Hu*

**NATACHA ATLAS SOMETHING DANGEROUS**  
*Mantra/US/CD*

Atlas has been floating around the world beat and electronic music scenes for a hot minute or two. Over the years, she's had a lot to do with the spread of the diasporan dub sound as the featured singer in Transglobal Underground, on her own solo work, and in collaborations with everyone from Jah Wobble to Jean-Michel Jarre. She's a superstar in the Arab world, France and in parts of Europe, but how would Atlas—she of the lotus-like voice—handle a cover version of James Brown's "Man's World"? By putting her own spin on it, thank you very much. Mixing Jamaican and American inflections with Moroccan melodies, or layering Middle-Eastern cadences over classical orchestra movements, *Something Dangerous*, Atlas's fifth solo album, is all over the map (which should be expected by now). It is also, for the most part, very good, even if it has more vocals in English than any previous Atlas album. But then, Natacha's pipes would sound impressive in any language. *Eric K. Arnold*

**AWOL ONE AND DADDY KEV SLANGUAGE**  
*Mush/US/CD*

What happens when an abstract producer and a way-out-there rapper get together to create hip-hop's answer to free jazz? Well, for one, it's weird. Very weird. Not weird like Mush's other

releases—way weirder. Awol One's rambling over this mix of bizarre beats and sounds is not for everyone—in fact, most hip-hop fans will find this project unlistenable. But fans of the Shapeshifter's Awol One will probably rejoice at the sound of his monotone voice droning on about love, J-L, medication and hip-hop. Awol breaks it down in "The Rules of the Week"; *Monday, I'm a pit bull/Tuesday, you're animation/Wednesday, I'm dedication/Thursday, you're a poem/Friday, we're all drunk idiots/Saturday, it's all just a sequel/Sunday, everybody's equal*. Like free jazz itself, this album will be detested by most, loved by a few and never truly understood by anyone. *DJ Anna*

**BOBBY KARATE HOT TRIPS, COLD RETURNS**  
*Woodson Lateral/US/CD*

Along with Electric Birds and L'usine, Bobby Karate (Steven Ford) is inflating Seattle's electronic-music scene into something worth your respect. A former punk-rock drummer, Bobby Karate—like Brad Laner/Electric Company and Ken Gibson/Eight Frozen Modules—has made a dazzling transition to minimalist laptop composition. Karate's debut disc melds math-rock's unpredictable time signatures to microsound's pointillist DSP and morphed field recordings. Combining Mego's crackling aggression with Mille Plateaux's elegantly designed clicks and cuts, he's birthed one of the year's most dynamic and distinctively constructed discs. Though largely unknown, Karate is swiftly rising to the upper echelon of laptop producers. *Dave Segal*

**BREAK REFORM FRACTURES**  
*Abstract Blue/UK/CD*

This trio from London has combined the heart-stopping realism of Nana Vorperian's vocals, sparse hip-hop orientated beats, and a fondness for jazzed-out, keyed flavors to produce an honest portrait of modern urban life. The sincerity of Nana's vocals can be related to as easily as a friend's real-life woes. "Fractures" captures the anguish of a love lost perfectly, courtesy of sighing strings, a vibration that feigns happiness and captivating vocals. "Medusa Pts 1 & 2" sees frustrated beats, tear-shaped keys and a weeping flute combine alongside Nana's distraught vocals. Timeless jazz-hop nu-soul for people with a heart. *Jon Freer*

**BUJU BANTON FRIENDS FOR LIFE**  
*VP/US/CD*

Buju Banton is the Don Dada of dancehall, period. When he traded in his gruff, sexually explicit toasts for soul-stirring roots reggae, he proved he was a champion there too. *Friends For Life* will become a classic because it crosses musical boundaries, with stops in hip-hop, r&b and African rhythms. Collaborations with Bounty Killer, Beres Hammond and Fat Joe are indicative of the musical journey this offering travels. Here is a mature Banton—Afrocentric, contemplative and apparently no longer a sexist. "Up Ye Mighty Race," a Nyabingi romp, calls for justice, while "All Will Be Fine," places Banton in the great Rastafari pantheon alongside Marley and Tosh. More than simply Jamaican music, this is music for the world. *Lynne D Johnson*



**CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA**  
**MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA**  
*Ninja Tune/UK/CD*  
 Evoking Portishead's ability to create groove and atmosphere simultaneously, Cinematic Orchestra brings depth and nuance to this interpretive set based on a silent 1930s era Soviet propaganda film. If all that sounds terribly heavy, imagine a grainy black-and-white film depicting scenes of the idealized socialist life—sparse, quiet, funny and a little sad—and you get a sense of Cinematic's jazzy constructions of samples, funky keys, grave strings, squealing saxophones and warm bass riffs. The tracks knock you out with their understated simplicity and occasionally goofy nostalgia, effortlessly creating a sense of an end, feeling and naive hope now long since vanished. *Matt Fisher*

**CODEC & FLEXOR TUBED**  
*Emperor Norton/US/CD*

On their first long player, Cologne duo Codec & Flexor lay out their MO: to mash bombastic rockisms and a snarling punk attitude with house and techno rhythms and textures. For all the criticism that the current penchant for all things electro welcomes, its detractors fail to see that many electronic and dance music fans are simply tired of the glut of current music infused with faux Afro-Latin and '70s jazz influences. This is *Tubed* synopsized: nasty, on tracks like "The Candy Cancer," "Beat Me," and "Don't Judge Me" they perfectly fuse the cocky cock rock of Judas Priest—whose logo they have shamelessly ripped off—with the heavy techno feel that swept through Europe in the early-'90s. Love it or hate it, dancey rock is here and it's here to spawn a thousand variants. Codec & Flexor's is just one but it's a damned fun one. *Chris Orr*



**CONTRIVA IF YOU HAD STAYED**  
**MASHA ORELLA LUCK**  
*Monika/GER/CD*  
 The second full-length by Berlin quartet Contriva has timeless charm. Their sweet, soothing guitar-driven pop instrumentals suffer a tinge of melancholy. Together, the group is touching and excellent in its own right, but not so forward-thinking as solo work by the band's guitarist/bassist, Masha Orella. With attentive use of electronics, she forges a sound that develops but departs from the folky lullabies of Contriva's post-rock. *Luck* explores a richness of bass and synth, delicate vocals, subtle electro and song structures perfectly adorned with jewels of silence. Contriva's sound may be sporadic, but Masha Orella is not to be slept on. *Liz Cordingley*

**COOL HIPNOISE SHOWCASE & MORE**  
*Select Cuts/GER/CD*

Afro-Brazilian cool and acid jazz form the outer contours of Cool Hipnoise, a group that combines electro flamboyance with dub flavor. Percussion arrangements range from ostentatious to ultra-urbane, interweaving clava, snare and African gourd sounds. "Dois" evokes Getzian Ipanema and "3 Por Timor" combines bossa nova bass with lilting horns. The populist spirit of dub is redolent in such tracks as "C'Mon Family," which features The Last Poets, and the swank redux of Nirvana's "Come As You Are." *Rachel Swan*



**BILLY DALESSANDRO MIDEVALIZATION**  
*Resopal/GER/CD*  
 Italy's Billy D drops his seventh release on Resopal, the solid new label run by Frank Elting and Stephan Lieb (MRI, Konvek|Konkav), and it's a dark, sultry stormer perfectly in line with Resopal's moody MO. Touched up with Teutonic oom-pah and slathered with Chicago acid, *Midievalization* eats away at you, especially on tracks like the wickedly funky "Show Yourself" and the appropriately named "At the Razor's Edge," where propulsive syncopations and buzzing, schizo inflections beat back reason with a backhand slap. Fans of Areal and Festplatten, agitate wildly. *Philip Sherburne*

**RICHARD DAVIS SAFETY**  
*Punkt/GER/CD*

Richard Davis has obviously been taking notes on all of the recent reconciliations of house in the image of clicks and cuts, and thankfully he doesn't regurgitate them. Instead, he rebuilds and reworks the cues into beautifully salient and crisp forays into the trademark understated-but-oh-so-fierce 4/4. Most appealing is Davis's precision production, where intelligent compression and a crisp meticulousness support the vocalist Souc Souc Silversponge's whispered sexiness along with Richard Davis's own appropriate vocal peppering. Like an Englishman living in Germany (which he is), Davis knows the benefit of coming from acid house but traveling the Trans-Europe Express. Davis's *Safety* is the juicier aspect of micro-house *J. David Marston*

**DEATH IN VEGAS SCORPIO RISING**  
*Concrete /UK/CD*

Beginning with their second album, 1999's *The Contino Sessions*, Death In Vegas have been more psychedelic rockers than dance-music producers. *Scorpio Rising*, Richard Fearless and Tim Holmes' lighter, more hopeful follow-up to that morbidly dark work, continues their trip into mind-altering rock. Similar to

David Holmes and Massive Attack, DIV act as conceptualists for a large, rotating cast of star singers (Liam Gallagher and Paul Weller, among others) and session players. Aided by legendary violinist L. Subramaniam, spectral guitar effects and liberal usage of sitar, the disc takes on an ethereal, uplifting glow, most powerfully on the Hope Sandoval-sung bliss-rock epic "Help Yourself." *Dave Segal*

**DYNAMO PRODUCTIONS ANALOGUE**  
*Illicit/UK/CD*

Compiled from previous EPs as well as new tracks, *Analogue* showcases the types of hard hip-hop and funk beats that have propelled Dynamo Productions' status as DJs. Plumbing (or more accurately, sampling) a line from the JB's through Eric B., the duo of Andy Smith (Portishead's tour DJ) and Scott Hendy (a.k.a. Boca 45) turns in tight pieces designed to rock a trainspotters floor filled with people who can name all the source pieces in a Bomb Squad production. A few of the tracks fail to transcend their loops and work best as DJ tools, but overall this is a very solid debut. One for fans of the old-school Grand Central sound. *Joe Rice*

**EL GUAP0 FAKE FRENCH**  
*Dischord/US/CD*

The DC-based trio El Guapo creates earnest three-minute sonatas that could almost be called art punk if they weren't so, well, electronic. Using drum machine pounding and clacking as a starting point, they haphazardly arrange stop/start indie-rock guitars, off-kilter drumming and cryptic vocals into a fusion that at best sounds like a new wave Sonic Youth ("Justin Destroyer," "The Time: Night") and at worst sounds like amateurish electro ("Just Don't Know"). I'd say *Fake French* finds the former free-jazz outfit settling into an endearing dance-punk sound, but this threesome values experimentation so much that their next album could well mix black metal with alt-country. *Vivian Host*



**FALKO BROCKSIEPER HOAX DELUXE**  
*Sub Static/GER/CD*  
 Part of the mighty Kompakt empire, Sub Static reinforces Germany as Earth's premier techno/house hotbed. On his debut album, label boss Falko Brocksieper forges sophisticated and quirky dance tracks designed neither for superclubs nor for intimate spaces, but rather for those enchanted rooms where jocks only spin Perlon, Playhouse, Kompakt, Traum and Sub Static platters. With a sly wink, Falko subtly twists tech-house—and, on the title cut, even EBM—protocols, but his work should please both cognoscenti and casual partiers. *Hoax Deluxe* carves out distinctive space in the overpopulated dance world. *Dave Segal*

**FALSE ESRAF**  
*Plus8/CAN/CD*

After a good string of releases for Ghostly International and Spectral Sounds, Ann Arbor's Matthew Dear brings a full-length of next-school minimal Detroit techno for Mr. Hawtin's Plus 8 venture. Hovering over the smacking claps, smeared voices and soda-bottle percussion that litter Dear's alternately burbling, murmuring and snappy arrangements is a potent, surround-sound bass sensibility that departs from the standard clipped low-end that minimalism usually offers up. Along with the slivered-sample approach he subtly integrates, Dear's bass-ic concerns bring a necessary, almost committed warmth to the proceedings in *eslaF*, making it far more than decent driving music. *Ron Nachmann*

**DOMENICO FERRARI COMMUTE**  
**LEME PASSION'N'PATIENCE**  
*Straight Ahead/SWIT/CD*

Acid jazz: negative connotations aside, much modern music from chillout to broken beat benefits from it, and two new releases from Zurich's Straight Ahead are imbued with the soulful looking-back-to-move-forward ethos of the oft-shunned genre. Leme's debut drips with classic soul vocals and funk licks, and its glossy production features a host of syncopated rhythms and electronic textures—everything that an American r&b album should be in 2003. Ferrari's latest, conversely, heads down a more abstract path, weaving urban poetry across a backdrop of experimental grooves featuring Ferrari's multi-instrumentalist talents and a penchant for heady analog tweaking. Now grow out that soul patch! *Mike Battaglia*



**FOG ETHER TEETH**  
*Ninja Tune/UK/CD*  
 Sitting (or possibly bouncing off the walls) at the furthest and most difficult end of Ninja Tune's increasingly broad spectrum, is Andrew Broder as Fog and his second album *Ether Teeth*. It's difficult to know where to begin, such is the magnitude of things crammed into this record. Fog seems to have the ability to directly transfer the contents of his head into music. And those contents comprise a strange brew, with elements of country and western, jazz, hip-hop, rock, blues and electronica all circling each other in a peculiar dance. For every moment of blatant beauty—for example the short but strangely sweet "CheerupCheerily" and the spellbinding "UnderAnniTree"—there's a moment of pure confusion. Ideas and threads, both musical and vocal, constantly float past your grasp of comparison, which, ultimately, is a good thing. *Steve Nickolls*

**FOREIGN LEGION PLAYTIGHT**

*Look Records/US/CD*  
 Bay Area b-boys extraordinaire Foreign Legion—Marc Stretch, Prozack and DJ Design—come strong on their aptly titled sophomore LP. High-octane party jams dominate, with block-rocking beats and braggadocio-filled rhymes galore. Never taking themselves too seriously, the NoCal trio let loose with 13 quality joints dedicated to mic-rocking, liquor-sipping and running game on the honeys. Check out the swinging retro-funk of "Party Crashers" or the neck-breaking "How Do It Feel?" for prime examples of the FL's sonic superiority. *Brolin Winning*



**FREESCHA WHATS COME INSIDE OF YOU**  
*Attacknine/US/CD*  
 What a title. Nick Huntington and Michael McGroarty are either the mack-daddies of downtempo IDM or the most sexually-frustrated among the laptop crowd, because there's no getting around just how sexy, bubbly and narcotic their third Freescha LP really is. *Whats* leaves behind the operatic melancholia of Freescha's first two albums, opting instead for the mesmerizing carnival funk of "Watcha Gonna Go For It?" and the synth-driven post-disco smarm on "Smurf Shoo," plus lots of genre-crossing ground in between. Cotton candy panties for your ears. Seeing as Freescha focus on actual melodies instead of loops for their music, labeling them the Boards of California is no longer viable. *Heath K. Hignight*

**BURNT FRIEDMAN & THE NEW DUB PLAYERS CAN'T COOL**  
*Nonplace/GER/CD*

From the opening moments of *Can't Cool*, Berlin-based Burnt Friedman's fourth long-player, you can sense that he's broadened his horizons even further and that the album is going to be funky as shit. From the slow dub jams to the fractured and minimal beats The Nu Dub Players understand the use of space in rhythm, and each instrumental part envelops its own musical position. Like earlier releases, the influences of Lee Perry's psychedelic mix-down techniques and King Tubby's booming atmospheres are strong in Friedman's work, but there is a Delta-fried blues presence in the sincere vocals of guests Don Abi and Patrice. As Friedman's journey to defy categories continues, us listeners luck out on his expansive tastes. *Jesse Terry*

**GAVOUNNA WARM INDUSTRY**  
*Melodic/UK/CD*

Continuing their lineage of discovering unknown, highly talented artists, Melodic provide a debut release for Greek producer Athanasios Argianas as Gavounna, a worthy labelmate for Melodic's already impressive stable, which includes Minotaur Shock, Lucky Pierre and Pedro. A proponent of found-sound-sampling, Gavounna constructs incredibly delicate instrumental tracks, imperceptibly shifting through both organic and electronic sources, touching on contemporary classical, electronica and (although not obviously) a certain atmosphere of traditional Greek music. Plaintive and often melancholy, Gavounna deftly conjures sounds that evoke life, rich in texture and often dreamlike in quality. For comparison, see Susumu Yokota and Mira Calix; for gentle experimental joy, see Gavounna. *Steve Nickolls*

**GHETTO PRIEST VULTURE CULTURE**  
*On.U/UK/CD*

On.U posse front man and brooding lyricist Ghetto Priest lets forth on this debut, pairing his dark lyrics and soulful delivery with Adrian Sherwood's swirling production. Bubbly dubs here, hard-edged distorted guitar there, roots stylee at one moment, dancehall boasts at another. Priest sings mournful chants against Babylon on cuts like "Earthquake in the Heart of Rome," and then backs the impossibly fast lyrical jabs by Irish chatter RiRa and the bassy bark of Simon Bogle. It's dancehall turned on its head in characteristic On.U fashion: always on the attack, keeping you off balance like a pink-faced Englishman poking you in the chest with one hand while slopping lager on his shoes with the other. *Matt Fisher*



**GHOST CAULDRON INVENT MODEST FIRES**  
*IK7/US/CD*  
 Why front on an album that invokes David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* on its first song? Berlin's Ghost Cauldron might offer a blender full of beats, but its sweep is nevertheless similar to cinema. "Fire Walk With Me," laden with cutting strings, measured piano and a plodding beat, feels like a soundtrack to the latest Ridley Scott blockbuster, while "Only at Night" samples Brando's canonical "horror" speech from *Apocalypse Now* (as well as its helicopter rotor noise). Any questions? With guest turns from cats like Priest and Anti-Pop Consortium, *Invent Modest Fires* feels like a sequel to John Carpenter's *Halloween*, but plays like the kind of Gothic pop that could use a little more time out of the studio. Thing get interesting when the eerie guitar and Nick Talyor's vocals kick in on "See What I've Become," but move to nostalgic when the Jan Hammer-like riffs on "Look Back See Forward" channel *Miami Vice*. All in all, an ambitious pomo homage to widescreens everywhere. *Scott Thill*

**GIGI ILLUMINATED AUDIO**  
**MAMANI KEITA & MARC MINELLI ELECTRO-BAMAKO**  
*Palm/US/CD*

Megacultural supa-label Palm Pictures places the vocals of two African female singers in the hands of a couple of expert Western producers, to mixed results. *Illuminated Audio* finds Bill Laswell reconfiguring Ethiopian singer Ejigayehu "Gigi" Shibabaw's eponymous '01 debut in the ambient-dub style he's applied to Miles, Marley and Santana. For the most part, he sweeps Gigi's voice into the epic, atmospheric whoosh and thump of his aesthetic, making it as much a Laswell album as anything else. Meanwhile, British producer Mark Minelli offers the jaunty, yearning Malian vocals of former Salif Keita backing singer Mamani Keita a far more structured and urbane context that leaps between reggae, urban jazz and café soundtrack. By avoiding Laswell's kind of voracious take-over appropriation, Minelli generates the kind of vital product that doesn't float off into ethno-mystical outer space. *Ron Nachmann*

**GRAVY TRAIN!!!! "HELLO DOCTOR"**  
*Kill Rock Stars/US/CD*

If there's one thing the unabashedly schlocky music of Gravy Train!!! doesn't suffer from, it's a lack of self-irony. The group grew famous poaching beats from Casio Tone for the Very Alone, and routinely drawing inspiration from malt liquor, Dairy Queen, and the ass bandit. On the album *Hello Doctor*, Chunx, Hunx, Funx and Drunx unleash their gutter-punk sass with no apologies—a method borrowed from the Yeasie Girls. Their most infectious tracks—"Titties Full" and the infamous "You Made Me Gay"—are meant to be played at full volume, and will make a whole art house get drunk. *Rachel Swan*

**JAMES HARDWAY BIG CASINO**  
**THE LITHIUM PROJECT MANY WORLDS THEORY**  
*Hydrogen Dukebox/UK/CD*

Inspired by Los Angeles and Las Vegas, David Harrow's *Big Casino* (as James Hardway) is filled with uptempo vocal set pieces, that imagine the infinitely cooler Sin City existing in gonzo fables. Collaborating with vocalists like Ghetto Priest, Eluv, JB Rose, and Tom Robinson, Harrow continues in the song-driven vein of *Straight From The Fridge*, with added lounge and swing influence—a Kurt Weill to J. Swinscoe's John Barry. The desert must be crossed to reach Vegas, of course, and The Lithium Project's *Many Worlds Theory* is the ideal soundtrack for an overnight ride of anticipation, hope and fear. It shares shadowy moods with Harrow's work, but is womblike and encompassing—an introverted converse to *Big Casino*'s showtime extroversion. *Joe Rice*



**CEEPHAX ACID CREW**  
**CEEPHAX ACID CREW**  
*Breakin'/UK/2CD*

Ah, the halcyon days of rave—those heady moments of dancefloor epiphany, stolen away in the setting of a dingy warehouse with the morning sun filtering in through skylights and the infectious sound of a TB-303 acid line writhing its way out of the speakers. Sound familiar? If so, you'll appreciate Ceephax's homage to that genre of dance music known simply as "acid"—it's all here, everything from the jittering chirp of the 303 to the taut kick drum to the warbling synth melodies. Ceephax's album itself gears down the tempo and gets decidedly more cerebral, whereas the bonus CD favors brain-curdling acid techno jams. *Brock Phillips*



**HECKER SUN PANDAMONIUM  
QUINTET AVANT FLOPPY NAILS**  
Mego/AT/CD

Played back to back, these two extremes of the same spectrum really please the palette. The digital eros of Florian Hecker quickly and rather subversively incites physical agitation in the same way that the best Merzbow performance sends memorable chills down the spine. And, quite unlike the playful and relaxed electro-acoustifications of Quintet, Hecker's maso-mechanistic screechings almost immediately establish themselves in a clawing, trance-like drone. After being digested by *Sun Pandamonium*, sitting on a bed of *Floppy Nails* just seems right. *Matt Eberhart*

**JORI HULKKONEN DIFFERENT**  
F Communications/FRA/CD

Like an amalgam of Derrick May and Marc Almond, Finland's Jori Hulkkonen proves that you can have fun and face the future all at once. *Different* finds the Finnish technoist indulging his guilty pop pleasures, as he enlists the help of electro maven Tiga on the almost too-silly "Blue & White." While Hulkkonen works up a bubbly tech-house lather, the mullet-sporting Montrealer sings a paean to Finland's finest hockey heroes. *Different?* Indeed. *Martin Turenne*

**I-WOLF SOUL STRATA**  
Klein/AUS/CD

Sofa Surfer Wolfgang Schlögl has been gettin' up off the couch to make Stateside trips in pursuit of his LA girlfriend. His resultant solo album has an American rock/soul/funk layer that departs from the Surfers' Viennese dub stylee. As I-Wolf, Schlögl wallows in the misgivings of a lovestruck soul. Guitar, bass, drum breaks, and slippery horns churn drunkenly behind rock and r&b vocals by the likes of Ken Cesar and Damon Aaron, plus a ragga chant by DJ Collage. See Raasaan Roland Kirk's 1971 *Natural Black Inventions: Root Strata* for more on the context of I-Wolf's passionate, successful debut. *Liz Cordingley*

**J BOOGIE'S DUBTRONIC SCIENCE**  
Om/US/CD

At an earlier point in life, I might have called J Boogie's *Dubtronic Science* a religious experience. But today the melody of loping, after-the-acid-trip tunes conjures visions of velour-clad hipsters lounging under junior prom disco balls. Stronger tracks like "Universal Dub,"

which features Jamaican radio DJ and poet Tony Moses, and "Movin to my Beat," with LA's People Under the Stairs, almost compensate for watered-down numbers like Goapale and Capitol A's "Try Me"—you'd expect more from some of these artists. But on the "beats for your sheets" tip, the album fulfills its promise. Don't believe me? Check Crown City Rockers MC Raashan's rap on "Get It Started." *Rachel Swan*

**JAGA JAZZIST THE STIX**  
Ninja Tune/UK/CD

With track titles like "I Could Have Killed Him in the Sauna," it's clear that whatever their aim, Jaga Jazzist aren't taking themselves too seriously. Part freeform jazz, part electronic groove, part cinematic ambience, the album's pieces evoke an ephemeral sense of nostalgia. Propelled by breakbeat-style drum kits and upright bass rhythms, saxophone and bass clarinet riffs are interspersed with Aphex Twin-like electronic clicks, vibraphone and a range of electronic atmospherics. At times like a Miles Davis free jam, at others like the lost score of Coppola's *The Conversation*, the result is something distinctly modern but at the same time full of wistful references to a past you can't quite place. *Matt Fisher*

**JOAKIM FANTOMES**  
Versatile/FRA/CD

Long live the French! First, they stand up to Dubya's war-mongering ways, and now they unleash an early contender for tech-house LP of the year, Joakim's *Fantomes*. As its title suggest, there's something distinctly ghostly about this album, as if the Gallic producer left the tapes running overnight to capture the murmurs and echoes of the post-industrial world. "Are You Vegetarian?" is particularly gratifying, a shotgun wedding of bulbous electro basslines and stroboscopic dub effects. "John," meanwhile, pounds away metronomically at the body, an Air-esque soundtrack to an imagined horror movie whose climax might just break your heart—literally. *Martin Turenne*

**ANGELA JOHNSON THEY DON'T KNOW**  
Purpose/US/CD

At some point, people are gonna realize the neo-soul thing is not just all hype. There's something real happening. Quite possibly, that moment might come soon after hearing *They Don't Know*, which neatly fills the space between hip-hop, R&B, jazz and downtempo. The multi-talented Johnson raises obvious comparisons to Peven Everett. Like Everett, she produces, arranges and plays keys, in addition to singing. Johnson's sound is fairly contemporary—DJ Spinna produces a track. Still, at times, an ol' school juke-joint feel creeps into the mix, especially on the N'Awlins-y blues romp "Cryin' Over U." Johnson's voice is strident without being overpowering, while her affinity for deeply soulful grooves and subtle musical nuances makes listening to this album the second or 20<sup>th</sup> time just as good as the first. *Eric K. Arnold*

**KOPERNIK AHMAD SZABO THIS BOOK IS ABOUT WORDS**  
Eastern Developments/US/CD

Scott Herren's (Prefuse 73) got a new label, but don't take his musical output as a measure of his taste. Kopernik's track titles are melodramatically suggestive, so it's no surprise the sound is analo-

gous to theatrical ambient or dramatized drone. But these awkward phrases describe a sound both beguilingly appealing and wonderfully rich. The presence of traditional instruments, elongated and sweeping, create an organic vibe, which make for a pleasingly polyglot trip. Ahmad Szabo is a guitarist first and a laptop-devotee second. Plucking melodic vignettes with a rich attention to the warmth of acoustic sound as well as an ear for hiccupping digital journeys, the sound is both familiar and fresh. From another room, the stitching is seamlessly fluid, but on a closer listen it becomes ruefully snagged. That's a good thing, cause it challenges you to multiple listens. *David Marston*

**LIAISONS DANGEREUSES**  
Hit Thing/GER/CD

More Jules Verne than Toffler, Liaisons Dangereuses' designs on tomorrow must have appealed just as much to Derrick May and Carl Craig. Or maybe it was their subversive nature—implant a kernel of chaos into otherwise quantized funk. In 1981, there weren't too many others making machines swing as hard as they do on "Peut Etre Pas" or "Los Ninos Del Parque." Except for Kraftwerk, of course. With all the reference and reverence of them, it would be easy to pass up a project such as Liaisons Dangereuses. This long overdue history lesson should seed some exciting new futures. *Dan Sicks*

**LONDON ELEKTRICITY BILLION DOLLAR GRAVY**  
Hospital/UK/CD

The long-overdue follow-up to 1999's seminal *Pull the Plug*, *Billion Dollar Gravy* takes the leftfield aesthetic of the London Electricity sound and fine-tunes it into an inspiring fusion of soul, funk, jazz and drum & bass. With an eye firmly on the dancefloor, Tony Colman (sans former L.E. partner, Chris Goss) cooks up an album that's heavy on the groove and all about the intricate textures that swim delicately in the background. Complemented by the silky vocals of Chicago's own Robert Owens and the spine-tingling Liane Carrol, Colman delivers the best drum & bass has to offer while still dipping into downtempo crossover mode with highly polished bits like "Main Ingredient," "My Dreams" and "To Be Me." Centered on oh-so-sweet basslines, crisp beats, strings and horns, it's easy to see why everyone from Fabio to Mr. Scruff are lining up for a piece of the action. *Chris Muniz*

**DANIEL MAGG FACETS**  
Compost/GER/CD

Compost is nothing if not consistent. The label is known for churning out classy, sophisticated nu-jazz/broken beat/house tunes at an alarming rate, and Daniel Magg's *Facets* is another fine example. The former Worldless People member's solo debut fits well with the long-established Compost sound, and really breaks no new ground. Still, with all the shimmering, soulful and danceable tunes on here, the album is by no means typical. With a host of guest artists popping up here and there (Minus 8, Wolfgang Rüter and Genterlain), Magg keeps the tempo up and the bassline groovy, and piles on just the right amount of leftfield flavor. *Christine Hsieh*

**MC LYTE IS LYTRO**  
DA UNDERGROUND HEAT VOL 1

With 15 years in the hip-hop game, six career albums and a greatest hits comp, MC Lyte was the first female rapper to turn out a gold single with the cult classic "Roughneck." With that said, if there were a university for female emcees, Lyte would be the dean. And though her machine-gun delivery is as present as ever on her seventh and latest release, that it was made in four days is quite apparent. Maad Phunk's production rests on overly tired loop production, which does nothing to pump up Lyte's lack of hook structure and trite lyrics focusing on her longstanding career. That today's female rappers would be nothing without her is true, but perhaps it's time to pass the torch. *Lynne d Johnson*

**MOCKY IN MESOPOTAMIA (J.D. SLAZENGER'S EDITION)**  
Gamma/GER/CD

Before they ran away to start their own dirty electro circus in Berlin, Peaches and Chilly Gonzales were in a punk band called The Shit, of which Dominic Salole, a.k.a. Mocky, was the drummer. Now an ex-pat in Holland, Mocky, too, makes freaky lo-fi 'lectro kitsch on *In Mesopotamia*, but it's the added hip-hop value that sets him apart. His Snoop-style MCing is notably pimp on the more straightforward beats of single "Sweet Music." Elsewhere, Mocky's abstract initiatives juxtapose spastic samples with mellow bourgeois ballads. As he raps on "Munky 'C' Munky Do," it's somewhat "...like Neanderthals breedin' with Europeans." *Liz Cordingley*

**MOUSE ON MARS GLAM**  
Thrill Jockey/US/CD

It's understandable why Josh Evans rejected the Mouse on Mars soundtrack for his film, *Glam*. Imagine audiences flinching from the sounds of mechanical dragonflies zig-zagging on a pond to flee from a blaring boombox nearby...while they try to seriously watch Tony Danza(!) slug a transvestite. This 1997 movie with such brilliant scenes fell straight into the video mausoleum. MoM then released their project in a scant, vinyl-only supply on their Sonig label. Thrill Jockey now reissues *Glam*, leaving more of us with the nice men's most accomplished work. The group's trademark ectoplasmic funk gymnastics and amniotic tone-scapes are in peak form here. Tracks range from drizzling electro-funk to meditative pieces that drug the imagination with Peter Max-caliber tours. An excavated gem of '90s electronica. *Cameron Macdonald*



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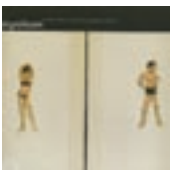


**SIXTOO ANTAGONIST SURVIVAL KIT**

*Vertical Form/UK/CD*  
Sixtoo leaps into the unheard with a deliciously informed piece of work ranging from tortured torch songs to instrumental hip-hop. Stylistically, there's no starting point except for a deeply abiding appreciation of sound in all its recorded forms that shines through on every track. The aforementioned instrumentals are alternatively stunningly agile ("Baroque") or gorgeously complex, while on the other end of the spectrum, the post-folk "A to Zero" centers on a deceptively simple guitar sample that shimmers with chill-out optimism. Like Saul Williams, Sixtoo is able to conjure up not only images, but also atmosphere—by at least the second listen you're firmly entrenched in this visionary's vision, with no need for an exit sign. Enjoy. *Margaret Murray*

**STERLING**

*File 13/US/CD*  
Screw Detroit—Chicago is the place to be if you're an indie music lover. Now File Thirteen Records has thrown its hat into the hype ring with the self-titled offering from Sterling, and the fit is formidable. Sterling's style sticks faithfully to the angular post-rock path taken by Godspeed You Black Emperor! (without the pious bombast) or Mogwai (without the distortion)—sometimes with, strangely enough, a little pre-synth Mermen thrown into the mix—making for potent night's worth of math-rock introspection. The piano evens out the addictive guitar nuances on some tracks, but Sterling's strong suit is its determined hypnotic progressions: they simply float like butterflies and sting like bees. A solid, emotional entry into a sometimes alienating genre. Grab this shit and spin it. *Scott Thill*



**STYROFOAM I'M WHAT'S THERE TO SHOW THAT SOMETHING'S MISSING**

*Morr/GER/CD*  
Arne van Petegem was once easy to overlook in the middle of Morr's roster of mellow, blissfully melancholy electronicists. No more—this time around, he keeps the slowed-down programming and DSP jabber, and slots in his own vocals. Van Petegem's wan, human voice is front-and-center amidst instrumentals as goopy and complex as any Mouse on Mars tunes, creating a perfect abstract pop album, the inverse negative of Schneider TM's carefree *Zoomer* from last year. *I'm What's There to Show That Something's Missing* proudly sports the new fusion of emo and IDM that shouldn't slip under the radar. *Rob Geary*

**SUPERSILENT 6**

*Rune Grammofon/NOR/CD*  
Supersilent has always been difficult to label. Their darkly atmospheric mix of electronics (processing, vintage synthesizers and the like) and acoustic instruments (trumpet, drums and the occasional guitar) seems to fall somewhere in the vast no-man's land separating post-rock, out jazz, and abstract electronic music. This fourth release by the Norwegian quartet finds the group in fine, brooding form. From the opening notes of the record, the group strikes a somber, elegiac tone, creating an extended magisterial dirge of organ augmented by clattering percussion and increasingly insistent squalls of electronics that swirl and howl like demons. It's an often somber, even funereal record, with few moments of unalloyed beauty (most often courtesy of Arve Henriksen's plaintive trumpet).

And yet, oddly enough, 6 is Supersilent's most immediately accessible record to date with its evocative half-melodies and glacial, drifting drones. *Susanna Balle*



**NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA SONGBOOK**

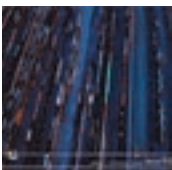
*Bubble Core/US/CD*  
*Songbook* is a tale sung in the native tongue of Moondonia. The mushroom people of this purple land live in lakes of rainbow glass. They pluck silver grapes from translucent octopi arms and whistle all the while. Nobukazu Takemura and his vocal sidekick Aki Tsuyoko bring Earth its first taste of the Moondonian dialect. It comes in soft, circular fragments, like the lullabies of baby pearls. Melodic lyrics float on soft cushions of analog synthesis and kaleidoscopic vibraphone sputters. Syncopated drum grooves bounce electric raindrops off glowing gopher heads. They get slightly wet until the floating fungi Samaritan offers an umbrella of layered trumpets. Please don't confuse Moondonian music with the cooing of 3-D cuckoo-clock chickens. They are cousins, but the former is much more beautiful. *frosty*

**TAME ONE WHEN RAPPERS ATTACK**

*Eastern Conference/US/CD*  
Coming back from the wrong side of the tracks is the Artifacts' Tame One, giving indie hip-hop a much-needed dose of back-to-basics rhyming. Considering how long it has been since he's had product out, Tame has very quickly knocked the dust off his flow, updating it with a few more multisyllabic rhymes. His delivery shows that he hasn't missed a step during his hiatus, as he confidently kicks clever metaphors like "*I register game like Jon Schecter.*" Unfortunately, the production isn't up to Tame's level—the tracks range from plodding and boring to mediocre. It's a shame Tame couldn't be backed with better beats to make this a complete package, but as a rhyming exposition, *When Rappers Attack* succeeds admirably. *Pete Babb*

**TES X2**

*Lex/US/CD*  
Tes's lyrical delivery has the piercing urgency of a bugle call, and his second EP is a call to arms for nostalgic city living. "New York" is trimmed with old school disco, a sweetly boasting *Saturday Night Fever* ode sung while swaggering past brownstone stoops. At his best, the skilled, bristly production is meaty enough to support his wide plank of a voice, but when he's rapping over dustier atmospherics, it's a strange mismatch of brassy rap and gray desolation. They're beats made for a spacer emcee, while Tes needs more solid ground. *Selena Hsu*



**VESSEL DREAMING IN PARIS**

*Expanding/UK/CD*  
Stealing fire from Warp and a page from Aphex Twin, Vessel cook up highly original IDM. Brindaince wouldn't be braindance if it wasn't a little dreamy, but these guys are laid back to the point of coma-inducement. They embellish their songs with the latest in squishy glitch drums, but include unneeded electro keys that destroy the shiny-new-sound feel that marks IDM's experimentalism. *Dreaming in Pairs* sounds like it should have been served around 1998—it's basically a great dish ruined by being left out in the cold. *Andrew Jones*

**VU (VARIABLE UNIT) HANDBOOK FOR THE APOCALYPSE: A HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE THROUGH THE CONFLICT**

*Wide Hive/US/CD*  
Like a bling-bling-and-bullets album dedicated to God, many artists are currently as ideologically slippery as a Humvee climbing the banks of the Euphrates. VU are not those artists. These are times to feel passionately about politics, and VU is here to give voice to everything you've been feeling, but have been told by nightly polls that it's impolite to say. Full of samples of demonstrators, visions of a humorously stark future, right-wing talking-heads and news broadcasts underscored by the mysterious Chief of Espionage on Rhodes organ, this is more than simple posturing. "I Was On A Journey To My Soul But The Police Just Pulled Me Over," a spoken word piece by Paul S. Flores, sums up the feeling of simmering anger spilling out of our cities right now. *Handbook* is a powerful throwback to an era when rap and spoken word mattered—when voices refused to be silenced or censored. *Margaret Murray*

**WATCHERS TO THE ROOFTOPS**

*Gern Blandsten/US/CD*  
This is some seriously dramatic art-funk that channels what was most interesting about the Talking Heads' canonical *Remain in Light*. Hey, it may be a PR selling point, but you'll shiver when you realize how much vocalist Michael Guarrine sounds like Byrne on the edgy, cutting "Our Exchange" (which itself ambles forward like "Born Under Punches") or "Gold Standard." Truth is, Watchers have more musical skill than the Heads, less self-conscious theater than the early Devo sound (check *Rooftops* "Two Worlds" for more on that), and chops equal to the similarly flavored Sweep the Leg Johnny or Minus the Bear. In other words, the Talking Heads comparison is neither a knock nor a PR pipe dream—it's a compliment. By the time you get to the laidback hooks of "The Dirty Sponsor," you'll be sucked in and pushed forward, having forgotten about the value of companions altogether. *Scott Thill*

**KEITH FULLERTON WHITMAN DARTMOUTH STREET UNDERPASS**

*AU RECYCLING Locust/US/CD*  
These first two installments of Locust's Met Life series feature two very different uses of urban field recordings from Keith Fullerton Whitman and Dutch post-rockers AU. Each issue of Met Life features a single, untreated recording and a response piece, using the sounds from the original. For his field recording, Whitman chooses a glass-walled pedestrian underpass, recording the reverberating sounds of distant trains, footsteps and voices that later provide the building blocks for a glorious, extended drone. For their part, AU recorded a cycling jaunt around The Hague, complete with whirring bicycle chains, traffic, drunken conversations and a brass band. This recording—apparently played straight through—subsequently provides the backdrop for a quietly drifting guitar and synth response piece. *Susanna Balle*

**WILDCHILD SECONDARY PROTOCOL**

*Stones Throw/US/CD*  
World renowned for his devastating lyrical skills, Wildchild has been blazing mics for over a decade, alongside his Lootpack cohorts and on various singles and collaborations. For his much-anticipated solo debut, he further proves himself as an "emcee's emcee," unleashing a torrent of complex yet funky wordplay throughout. Produced entirely by Stones Throw compatriots Madlib and Oh No, *Secondary Protocol* bangs from start to finish, highlighted by instant classics like "Code Red" and "Puttin' In Work." Guests include Medaphoar, LMNO, Percee P, Planet Asia and Aceyalone, though Wildchild himself is the real star here. *Brolin Winning*

**WORM IS GREEN AUTOMAGIC**

*TMT/ICE/CD*  
Well, Dntel fever is evidently sweeping the world, not even leaving the windswept arctic tundras of Iceland untouched. After bringing the electro-enhanced slowcore jams of Múm, TMT records introduces Worm is Green, which steps up the global glitch-pop explosion with prominent female and sometimes male vocals, a bassist, a drummer and an avalanche of nocturnal synthesized solitude. If this sounds like your bag, relish in the swirling growl of synthesizers, laptop-affected drums, and immediate vocals. If it doesn't, it's because the album is based too much in a traditional song structure and doesn't leave enough room for abstraction. *Brión Paul*

**YOSHIMI AND YUKA FLOWER WITH NO COLOR**

*Ipecac/US/CD*  
Sure to be overlooked for its elegant subtlety, Cibo Matto-programmer Yuka Honda and Yoshimi P-We (Boredoms, OIOIO, Free Kitten) have created a minor ambient/improv masterpiece in *Flower With No Color*. Made while traveling and living together in rural Japan, *Flower* gathers field recordings of birds, temple bells and sounds of their truck with piano, bamboo flutes, trumpets and synthesizers into a something not unlike Alice Coltrane, Sun Ra and Damo Suzuki wandering Mt. Ikoma on opium. Easily one of the most sublime 45-minute listening sessions I've spent in some time. *Alexis Georgopoulos*



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The Cinematic Orchestra return with their third full length record, a composed soundtrack to Dziga Vertov's 1920's Russian silent film *The Man With A Movie Camera*, originally commissioned by the Porto Film Festival in Portugal.

Some of these tracks found their way in different mutations on last year's critically acclaimed 'Everyday' release, and appear here for the first time in their original form. Available May 20. A companion DVD will be released June 17 which features the original film with Cinematic Orchestra score, plus bonus live and interview footage.

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**KLUTE**  
**LIE CHEAT & STEAL**  
**YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED**  
*Commercial Suicide/UK/CD*  
Klute simultaneously goes with the grain and against it on this two-disc set. Despite the dark title, *Lie Cheat & Steal* kicks off with lush, meandering drum & bass, awash in synthetic strings and airy melodies underpinned by sturdy, dancefloor-ready breaks and bass. The tracks are beautifully arranged, stately and atmospheric—entirely what listeners have come to expect from this d&b stalwart. On the second CD, Klute veers off the beaten path, serving up leftfield breaks, early-'90s techno and swirling downtempo, among other genres. *You Should Be Ashamed* might be an apt title, considering that most diehard d&b fans will probably recoil in horror when confronted with the horrorcore trip bleeps of "Black Flag," the Banco de Gaia-style ethno beats of "Artificial Sense" and the proto-gabber of "Jamm the Box." Whether or not this amounts to Commercial Suicide is the consumer's decision, but you've gotta respect this ex-punk rocker for showing his multiple personalities, even if those personalities sometimes want to make tweaker techno. *Vivian Host*

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 <p><b>SA SMASH</b> <i>Smashy Trashy</i></p>	 <p><b>SCIENCE FICTION</b> <i>Walls Don't Exist</i></p>	 <p><b>STARK REALITY</b> <i>Now</i></p>	 <p><b>LEXOLEUM</b> <i>Various Artists</i></p>	
<p>Boombap rap from one of Boston's finest. Balance is Akrobatik's debut full-length. Guests include Da Beatminerz, DJ Revolution, Diamond D, Mr. Lif and Fats One.</p>	<p>...The heavy Afro bass lines that penetrate many of the tracks are guaranteed to get you moving, and the album itself is extremely well produced by Manasseh... Overall, a great listen for anyone looking to pass the time to the gentle hush of maracas, lilting vocals, and some one of a kind beats." -DJ Times</p>	<p>The 1st release for the new On-U label division Sound Boy. Original Guerilla Music includes productions by Lee Perry, Augustus Pablo, Prince Jammy, or Sly &amp; Robbie's Taxi production and others. Now three decades deep, his recorded legacy includes some of the most righteous, dread-filled works of the entire reggae canon, and especially those dates from the mid-to-late seventies, as compiled here.</p>	<p>The ultimate Rare Groove mix from legendary DJ Norman Jay: 17 of his favorite tracks, from Funk to House to R'n'B - a great party album and a true collector's item.</p>	
<p>The duo of Camu Tao (mHZ, Weathermen) and Metro bring a bad attitude and hard, nasty beats courtesy of Camu, EL-P, Embedded, and Prizm. On Definitive Jux.</p>	<p>Lying against the grain like a distressed damsel tied to the train tracks of convention, this singer songwriter heralds a future that has been called upon for years past.</p>	<p>Stones Throw Records re-releases the holy grail of late 60s psychedelic jazz funk, with recently discovered bonus tracks!</p>	<p>From Sage Francis to Peaches, Edan to Supersoul, Boom Bap to J-Zone - Lexoleum highlights the diversity of Lex output.</p>	



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**ELEKTRONISCHE MUSIK INTERKONTINENTAL 2**  
*Traum/GER/CD*

"Dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible," wrote Adorno in 1944. "The traditional residences we grew up in have grown intolerable; each trait of comfort in them is paid for with a betrayal of knowledge, each vestige of shelter with the musty pact of family interests." Glibly extrapolating the German philosopher's arguments about subjects, nations, and knowledge, we might note that in 2003, the House of Techno is no less shaky; "the musty pact of family interests" sounds a lot like the compromise that comes with any allegiance to genre.

But Cologne's Kompakt seems out to disprove the theory, having moved into a new space that promises to be the international seat of the microhouse nation. Kompakt has built microhouse its home, because techno, the wandering genre, only dwells *in the mix*. Kompakt's recent compilations—*Friends* (mixed by Triple R), *Immer*, and *Speicher* (both mixed by Michael Mayer)—are like techno's *Real World* sans the drama, architectural cross-sections revealing what happens when microhouse's public and private natures collide.

But dwelling is an issue of nation as much as place, and if Kompakt is the world's microhouse superpower, then Traum is its UN label. Label head Riley Reinhold has spent the last few years scouring Eastern Europe, the Americas, and Asia for refugee strains of Kompakt-styled shufflepunk, recording them and bringing them back to the fold. *Elektronische Musik-Interkontinental 2*, represents Japan, Poland, Mexico, Australia, Canada, the U.S., and more, suggesting both the durability and the mutability of the form.

It's uncanny, at first, to hear how closely these tracks hew to what we think of as intrinsically Teutonic (post-)techno, but the tiniest details mark their distance from the source like pushpins on a map. If anything, Fax's "Danz" outdoes the Profan crew at their own game. The sound may have been born in Cologne, but Fax (a.k.a. Mexico's Ruben Tamayo) updates the blunted lurch and gritty glide of M.I:5 and Jochem Spieth with a particularly dessicated feel that's as addictive as a fistful of salt. France's Yomgaille reworks Dettinger-styled ambiance with "There," a chugging swirl of competing downbeats that seems perpetually on the verge of drowning in its own wake. Straying further afield, Denmark's Mikkel Metal sets up a shrine to Chicago and Jamaica with "Delete," a plaintive fusion of dub effects and post-rock guitars.

This isn't just about artists mimicking German styles; what's fascinating here is how Traum has uncovered an intercontinental unconscious. Japan's Darmush and America's Smartypants for instance, both tap into the same strange, striated synthesizer tone, as though each were holding up one end of an international taffy-pull. Their similarities have less to do with genre than with a zeitgeist that privileges highly interiorized but still dance club-worthy music, presupposing both infrastructure and audience. It is, I dare say, a utopian project. Like virtual states such as Elgaland-Vargalandia and the State of Sabotage, which sidestep the collapsing world of nation-states with mental and digital "border territories" Traum and its allies accomplish the same in purely sonic terms. *Elektronische Musik-Interkontinental 2* is the passport to a state of bliss. *Philip Sherburne*





**TEUTONIK DISASTER**  
*Gomma/GER/CD*

There's only so many times you can walk into a Lower East Side bar full of patrons clothed in jackets coated in one-inch badges, posturing in deftly worn Levi's, cheesecloth-thin vintage RUN-DMC tees, and perfectly asked trucker cap, waving to Casey Spooner, sipping Red Stripes and doing PCP with Ryan McGinley, and then knowingly call out each endlessly re-issued post-punk classic. Yes, we've all heard Yello, Laidback and Alexander Robotnik's classics played repeatedly. But what you may ask, were the Germans up to during those important years of 1977-1983? Well, Deutsch duo Munk definitively answer that question here by overseeing this engaging compilation on their label of endlessly issued perfection, Gomma. While doubters may giggle at the sounds of the German language getting funky over some of the synth-heavy rhythm tracks, true believers in true good music will recognize this eye-opening vault for the goldmine it is. *Brian Paul*

**7L & TALL MATT: WE DRINK OLD GOLD**

*Sandbox Automatic/US/CD*  
As a dedicated mixtape head, I love and hate this CD. Love it because it's packed full of golden-era goodness; hate it because they have records I want (yo, I'mma knock you fools out for those Sir Ibu and 360 singles!). The track listing is the main attraction here: rare cuts from the late '80s and early '90s, featuring artists like Chill Rob G, Doug E. Fresh and Nice & Smooth, plus a bunch of more obscure names. The mixing is very smooth, but both DJs wisely stand back from turntable trickery, letting these songs speak for themselves. *Pete Babb*



**A BLOW TO THE STATE**

*Coup D'Etat/US/CD*  
An indie hip-hop label obsessed with the politics of the business—what could be more tired? Though its obsession with record industry shadiness borders on the pathological, Coup D'Etat's stable of artists, including J-Live, Rasco, Faks One and Akrobatik, has the skills and imagination to transcend the simplicity of this compilation's raison d'être. For example, Rasco dispenses with the generalized money anxieties and mistrust that have become two of hip-hop's most obvious and annoying themes, instead using "Snakes In The Grass" to not only describe his mistreatment while signed to Copasetic Records, but to name names, calling out label head Jon Sexton and threatening him with violence. Now, that's like whoa. *James Friedman*

**APHRODITE: URBAN JUNGLIST**

*Spun/US/CD*  
The jungle equivalent of the kind of wet t-shirt contest in which everyone gets hosed down as they jump the fuck up, Aphrodite's latest mix is charged with overwhelming pneumatic bounce and drenched with a lush energy, and it's big big big. Featuring ragga bumpin', sassed-to-the-max vocals and flamenco come-ons, there ain't nothing subtle about the irrepressible party contained herein. Gavin King sticks to his trademark sound, but shines it up till each curve is slappworthy. Makes like a busted-up fire hydrant on a sweltering day—basic like water and cement, but, in the moment, so much more. *Selena Hsu*

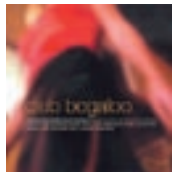
**BABYLON IS OURS: THE USA IN DUB**

*Echo Beach-Select Cuts/GER/CD*  
Dub is clearly on the rise in the US, as *Babylon Is Ours* quickly shows. Check the differing use of frequency range, mixing techniques and instrumentation, as each artist's vision of dub covers quite a broad spectrum. King Tubby's raw production influence is pervasive, yet each of the 12 artists brings different source material—including hip-hop (Tino), downtempo (Ben Wa) and drum & bass (Otaaku). Other highlights include Portland's Systemwide (featuring Dr. Israel and DJ Collage), Santa Cruz's Dub Congress and DC's Avatars of Dub, who nicely reference the sounds of Black Uhuru and Augustus Pablo with a bit of uptempo mash-up. A stateside tribute to classic dub that doesn't lack for groundbreaking experimentation. *Jesse Terry*

**BADD INC: LUXURY EXCESS EXTRAVAGANCE**

*Mogul Electro/US/CD*  
Being "camp" isn't nearly as easy as it looks, a lesson that electroclash don Larry Tee has seemingly yet to learn. On this hastily compiled disc, Tee and his merry band of Brooklynites plant the final nail in the coffin of nu-wave, a movement dead from an overdose of irony. While some in the scene have teased bril-

liance out of their chintzy synths and rigid grooveboxes, the *Badd Inc.* artists (including girl-group W.I.T.) can't muster a single memorable hook between them. This isn't funny anymore. It's just plain sad. *Martin Turenne*



**CLUB BOGALOO 2**

*Spinning Wheel/GER/CD*  
Celebrating the fifth anniversary of their highly regarded club night, Club Bogaloo present their second compilation of exclusive cuts from the high quality selection of artists who have graced their decks. Their tag line, "more freestyles out of nowhere," is certainly apt, as this collection moves with customary European style from the deep bossa jazz of Ian Simmonds's project Wisetime, through the deep house of Jimpster, to the string-laden jazz of Reunion. Despite a couple of fillers, this is top-grade stuff, with Mark De Clive Lowe's ace broken vocal garage track "The Way That It Goes," and Bugz man Alex Phountzi's "Make It Right" (featuring the wonderful Vanessa Freeman) standing proud in the selection and worth the admission price alone. *Steve Nickolls*



**CORTEX VOLUME 2**

*Follow Me/FRA/CD*  
Ummm... elevator with an edge? In *Volume 2*, which features tracks reissued from 1977-Cortex dishes out the kind of super-kitsch tunes that Chick Corea might be playing if he took a lot of acid and joined the Average White Band. What results is a balmy collection of jazz-rock tracks, the kind of posterboard stuff that would suit a '70s exploitation film. Musically, the album's tepid: a synth dithering on the pentatonic scale, a little feedback-laced guitar, and a lot of thack-thwacky high-hat. If you're down for cheese, I recommend the sing-songy "Regina" and the agreeably funky "Mister J." *Rachel Swan*

**DJ HYPER: FRACTURED**

*Bedrock Breaks/UK/CD*  
Even drum & bass, the bastard child of dance music, had more representation than nu-skoool breaks at this year's WMC. Help is on the way, as Bedrock Breaks is poised to infiltrate the mainstream with this double-CD compiled by London's 21-year-old Guy Hatfield. Starting off as a relaxed and heady affair, the mix segues into harder dance tracks on CD 2. Unreleased material peppered with last year's anthems showcase all the stars: Fatliners, BLIM, IIs and Kemek the Dope Computer are just a start. With this thorough representation of breakbeat innovation, maybe soon the world will wake up from its trance. *DMatrix*

**DJ SOULSLINGER PRESENTS ECOSYSTEM: THE BRAZILIAN JOINT**

*Unity/US/CD*  
Soulslinger's most recent project—saving the Amazon forests via drum & bass—results both in a valiant cause and a compelling fusion of Brazilian melodies and drum-heavy jungle rhythms. His ever-aggressive style avoids most of the current trends of lite drum 'n' bossa, yet still gives tribute to Brazilian flavor through a seamless mix of vocal tracks, with the exception of another effective reworking of his "Ethiopia" anthem. Though a tribute to the rainforest, this mix belongs on the beach—bright, sunny and body-moving. *Jon Weldon*

**FAMILY TREE: TREE HOUSE ROCK**

*All Natural Inc/US/CD*  
Chicago's Family Tree crew has been building up a rep for making solid tunes. This compilation illustrates that, though it isn't without some skipworthy tracks. The production, largely by the criminally underrated Molemen, is consistent throughout, heavy on the boom-bap and buoyed by creative samples. And there's plenty of great scratch hooks courtesy of Tone B. Nimble and DJ Precyse. The rapping, on the other hand, has a few dead spots. Take, for example, "Horse," featuring Mr. Greenweed and Allstar. It's a great concept—the MCs trade verses in a game of Horse—but it's muddled in subpar rhyming. But the Family Tree is a collective of good lyricists, if not always the best MCs, so the good moments far outweigh the bad on this collection. *Pete Babb*



**FUTURE SOUNDS OF JAZZ 9**

*Compost/GER/CD*  
The most admirable aspect of Compost's FSOJ series is its diversity; each installment delivers a different version of the shape of jazz to come. Packaged with a swanky 3-D cover (glasses included), number nine is relentlessly infectious. The alternate versions of musical reality range from a slightly neo-soul slant to airy downtempo, jazzy rides, uptempo broken beats and seriously soulful vocals. Ultimately, the album's mix of electronic and organic drums is what makes it special—it's like a musical cyborg built from the best scraps that jazz and electronic music have to offer. Every Compost release makes me want to run out and buy their next one. *Jesse Terry*

**GIARDINI DI MIRO: THE ACADEMIC RISE OF FALLING DRIFTERS**

*2.nd/GER/CD*  
Wait! Don't get scared off by the inclusion of remixes by usual suspects Styrofoam, Herrmann & Kleine, Opiate, Dntel, Turner and Isan. While they issue plenty of worthwhile music with alarming frequency on their own, here they're given a substantial challenge in the source music of Giardini Di Miro. The aforementioned artists, plus Nitrada and errorEncountered, layer the intrigue with echoes of its original rock instrumentation—oceanic guitars and vapor trails of air-weight vocals. Each remix is a revelation, a brilliant fusion of its origin and its newly re-engineered life. *Brian Paul*

**GROUNDED SOUND**

*Grounded/US/CD*  
After a long, dark winter, this first full-length release on Boston's Grounded records is a welcome thing indeed. Full of shimmering melodies and delicate beats, it has an almost vernal feel to it, appropriate for the springtime profusion of flora and fauna. Beginning with the tripped-out buzz and hum of E'Rock's "Ice Museum" through to the slow krautrock groove of Charles Atlas's "Italian Air," this is a beautifully subtle collection of quietly jittery beats and warmly melodic electronics. The line-up features such familiar names as Ogurusu Norihide, Emotional Joystick and Greg Davis, but many of its finest moments come courtesy of lesser-known artists (most from Boston), such as Mister Interrupt, Don Mennerich and Sopierfo. Quite lovely. *Susanna Bolle*

**HOW TO KILL THE DJ PART ONE**

*Tigersushi/FRA/CD*  
Paris club Le Pulp hosts Kill the DJ nights on the first Thursday of each month, and if this CD (arranged/mixed by DJ Ivan Smaghe) is a true indication of their musical policy, it sounds like a lot of fun. When the opening fun house cut, Roger's tributary "Helsinki Blondes" segues so naturally with Captain Comatosé's Afrobeat-channeling "Wonderkid," there's an immediate sense that this isn't your average club-branded compilation, but one with a wide-ranging musical ear. A Kill the DJ edit of Soft Cell's "Tainted Love" and a wicked electro-funk remix of Ministry's "I Wanted To Tell Her" help fuel the slightly dark and industrial edge that lurks beneath the grooves. This collection could quite easily be the next victim of your repeat button. *Tamara Palmer*

**IDOL TRYOUTS**

*Ghostly International/US/CD*  
There's a myth out there about how techno in Detroit is dead. One could choose to believe that, depending on the parameters. But, with a little bit more latitude in definition and geography, things have never been better. Case in point: this compilation from Ann Arbor's Ghostly International. *Idol Tryouts* spans a healthy mix, from the artistry of Matthew Dear and Osborne's house to the computer-aided rock of Midwest Product. It also sports a variety-pack of electro flavors, including evolutionary, ballys cuts like Kill Memory Crash's "Get Out." If anything, Detroit's influence is alive, well and still spreading like wildfire. *Dan Sicko*

**JAY-J & MIGUEL MIGS: WEST COAST SESSIONS**

*Defected/UK/CD*  
Defected makes its presence felt stateside via a new series of double-mix-CDs featuring the cream of US dance music mavens. For its inaugural mixes, Defected teams Grammy nominee Jay-J and prolific DJ/producer Miguel Migs on the aptly titled *West Coast Sessions*. They offer up the smooth West Coast fare you'd expect from the San Fran-based duo, with zero surprises. A change of texture to differentiate one from the other would have been interesting. Instead, this collection of palatable dance music merely entertains, but never provokes. *June Joseph*



**KRAZY KNOCKOUT**

*Greensleeves/UK/CD*  
Krazy scores a victory over *Knockout* with a melodic whistle and tricky break, leaving *Knockout* cold and chaotic. *Knockout* indeed scorches the sonics with a shrill electric burst backed by busy handclaps and hi-toms, thereby getting the most balanced treatment by Mr. Vegas's squeaky-clean crooning on "It's Raining" and TOK's varying sweet tones on "We Pop the Heat" Krazy's relentlessness sounds best by Angel Doolas and Bounty Killer—one silky and smooth, the other deep and militant—while controlled handily by Lady Saw's vocal syncopation. Though textured and active, both rhythms are still too tough for anthem status. *Jon Weldon*

**LOST TREASURES**

*Make Some Noise/UK/CD*  
Occasionally a record pops up that simply doesn't make sense, for better or worse, no matter how many times you listen to it. *Lost Treasures* is one of those. Bomb 20 and Patric C, late of Digital Hardcore, rounded up a bunch of rhymers (including Chilly Gonzales, Peaches and others) for jams that range from straight-up sampler bangers to noisy distortion meltdowns. Think of *Lost Treasures* as a Berlin version of Handsome Boy Modeling School—which, come to think of it, didn't make too much sense either. Try "Monster Bitches," a dubbed-out horror tale of Halloween booty. Huh? *Rob Geary*

**MATHIAS SCHAFFHAUSER: SELECTED REMIXES VOL. 1**

*Multicolor/GER/CD*  
Relatively unknown outside the tight circles of Germany's tech-house scene, Mathias Schaffhauser has been creating major waves for more adventurous dancefloors. While this collection of his best remix work might be considered "minimal," the tracks are anything but: multilayered, heavily detailed sound evolutions that often take surprising twists, like the bongo breakdown in Digital South's "No Good," or the point in Luomo's "Tessio" that could be grimy UK garage if not for the Basic Channel-esque filterisms bouncing around the soundfield. An often quirky but solidly funky release. *Mike Battaglia*

**NONESUCH EXPLORER SERIES: INDONESIA AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC**

*Nonesuch/US/12xCD*  
The exotic sounds of the gamelan in its seemingly infinite manifestations are the focal point of this second installment of CD reissues of Nonesuch's historic Explorer series. This exhaustive collection features recordings of gamelan orchestras from the far reaches of the Indonesian archipelago, as well as popular music from Tahiti and the South Pacific islands. The original LP releases had a profound influence on Western experimental music when they were first put out in 1967. The music varies widely from the formal, stately court gamelan of Java—with its silky, flowing sounds and unusual melodic forms—to the more frenetically percussive Balinese version. It's an amazingly complex collection, not only because it captures the well-known beauty of gamelan, but also because it reflects its complexity, documenting these myriad co-existing musical traditions on the eve of the homogenizing onslaught of modern mass culture. *Susanna Bolle*



**PEANUT BUTTER WOLF: BADMEANING-GOOD VOL. 3**

*Ultimate Dilemma/UK/CD*  
Imagine a loft party where yuppie Reaganites nervously shuffle along to The Human League and Joe Jackson on a cardboard-covered dancefloor that's hogged by b-bosys who slam into oily-haired swingers trying to hook up over the fondue pot. Such imagery comes to mind when turntablist legend Peanut Butter Wolf presents a slide-show of what hip-hop means to him in the *Badmeaninggood* DJ-roots series. Unfortunately, his broad aesthetic is often vague and uneven here. Wolf begins with classic breaks from Grandmaster Flash and Lord Alibaski, and then overindulges in easy-listening "urban FM" fodder, before dub poet Prince Far I and the Jungle Brothers finally show up and save the night with fresh kegs. Unsettling. *Cameron Macdonald*

**PLAYLIST: COMPILED BY JAZZANOVA**

*JCR/GER/CD*  
This first-ever compilation from Jazzanova's vital JCR label, while sadly bereft of the legendary mixing skills of its German owners, flaunts a diversity and consistency not often seen in the dance world. Teeming with jazz influence yet wildly varied, *Playlist* melts organically from Victor Davies's mellow acoustic soul and unearthed Eastern European jazz from both Jerzy Millian and the sublime Novi Singers, to exquisite nu-jazz and broken beat flavors from scene stalwarts like Nuspirit Helsinki, Rima and Jazzanova themselves, connecting the dots between the past, present and future via the thread of jazz running through every track. Lush, innovative and essential. *Mike Battaglia*



**THE PRODUCE SECTION VOLUME 1**

*Wishbone/US/CD*  
Wishbone Entertainment is a group of MCs, DJs, entertainers and activists loosely organized around a core known as Felonius. *The Produce Section* is like a tape of a weekend basement session, with Felonius bringing the loops and instruments, and a group of conscious MCs kicking it over the top just for the sheer joy of it. On "Protest," they reveal a sharp eye for aspects of politics that often go unno-

ticed, like the racial composition of the armed forces. "1234" takes the prize here, though, simply for featuring raps for unity in English, Spanish and German all in one track. *Rob Geary*

**RAWKUS PRESENTS: THE MIXTAPE**

*Rawkus/US/CD*  
For those who remember Rawkus's 1999 release *Soundboming II*, it goes without saying that *The Mixtape* is tighter than Spandex. The old cats are back: Mos Def, Treach, Shells, G Fella and Buck Shot chop it up on a gritty freestyle joint, and Skilz flows glibly over 50 Cent's "In Da Club," boasting that he was sick back when "Russell Simmons used to get government cheese...and Too \$hort got his ass whipped for singing in the house." Mos Def's new "Close to the Edge" is lean in production but lyrically poppin', as Def kicks firecracker rhymes over chic bongo beats. *Rachel Swan*

**RICHARD DORFMEISTER PRESENTS: A DIFFERENT DRUMMER MIX**

*Different Drummer/UK/CD*  
Who better to handle the task of selecting cuts from Birmingham's Different Drummer than Kruder & Tosca's other half? Dorfmeister delves into a stellar back catalog, taking you on a subdued journey via tracks by G-Corp, Noiseshaper, Original Rockers and more. Dub is the glue that binds these tracks together—whether the beats are house flavored, reggae-inflected or straight downtempo, echoes and reverberation pacify the rhythm. Warm and blissful with a taste of skank, this thing'll make you want to take a plane, boat or car to get to the next Different Drummer party. *Jesse Terry*

**THE ROUGH GUIDE TO THE ASIAN UNDERGROUND**

*Rough Guides/UK/CD*  
One glance at the tracklisting and you might think, "Where the hell is Talvin Singh?" But after reading seven pages of liner notes, you learn that he's Mahatma T, whose tablatronic "Jihad" is included. The disc opens with the late Ananda Shankar's "Streets of Calcutta," a precursor to later Bollywood crossovers, while Asian Dub Foundation, TJ Rehmi and Mo Magic stand out by repping the d&b camp solidly. If a bit unfocused, the disc is a good primer, but probably not the best bet for those who remember when these beats were still hot from the tandoori oven. *Liz Cordingley*

**THE SELECTOR SERIES VOL. 1: MIXED BY ALEX ATTIAS**

*Goya/UK/CD*  
Known for his future jazz productions as part of Beatless, Bel-Air Project, and Plutonia, Alex Attias demonstrates here that he's one of the finest DJs rocking spots in any genre. On this release from famed West London distributor Goya, Attias throws down a top-notch club set that balances the off-kilter tension of broken beat with straight-up house grooves. Imagining oneself lost in a sweaty root-down is effortless when listening to this mix, which features artists like Domu, Osunlade, Peven Everett, Dego and I.G. Culture. The set peaks with Ayro's "Let This," a piece which in four minutes sums up the range of rhythm and soul that permeates the entire collection. *Joe Rice*

**THE SOUND OF MOVEMENT: MIXED BY BRYAN GEE**

*Movement/UK/CD*  
You can't divorce drum & bass from the dancefloor, and *The Sound of Movement* shows why you would never, ever want to. The mix—by V Recordings honcho Bryan Gee—is 100% pure fire, kicking off with a jumpy remix of the Roni Size classic "Trust Me," and swerving back and forth between soaring vocal melodic numbers and rough, bassline-driven tracks. As the title suggests, it's an excellent representation of the kind of tracks and rapid-fire mixing that packs 'em in at the long-running Movement Thursday night at London's Bar Rumba. Gee's mixing can be sloppy at times, but that hardly matters as Dillinja's "Warning" segues into J Magik & Sonic's "New Generation" and all hands go flying in the air. Lightaaaah! *Vivian Host*



**THINKBOX EDITIONS 1: SETTINGS**

*Thinkbox/CAN/CD*  
Windsor/Detroit's Thinkbox offers itself as the latest entrant to the North American pantheon of micro-labels peddling minimalistic sounds; its first compilation includes known entities like Bill Van Loo and Mark Laliberte as well as less familiar names Steve Roy and Christopher Bissonnette. There's nary a 4/4 kick to be found here—the comp slides from fuzzed needle-hiss to battered ambience in the vein of Lucky Kitchen's "Sparkling Composers" series. Field recordings, melted bell tones, lung rustle and run-out rattle all blur together into a remarkably accomplished collection that burrows deep into your cortex and blooms there. *Philip Sherburne*

**WELL-SUITED FOR GENERAL PURPOSE AUDIO WORK**

*Schematic/US/LP*  
This latest compilation from Miami's Schematic features all the usual suspects—label-heads Phoenecia, boy genius Richard Devine, resident madman Otto von Schirach and relative upstart Dino Felipe—plus one semi-newcomer along for the ride, Ischemic's Kiyo. As you would expect from such a line-up, the two records are littered with hopped-up beats that skitter, pop, twist, bend and pile on top of each other with reckless abandon. But it's not the manic beats and frantic sample-overload of, say, a prankster such as Otto von Schirach that makes this record pop—indeed Schirach's schtick serves only as a minor, if enjoyable, diversion. Rather, the more refined (though hardly sweet or cloying) laptop concrète of Dino Felipe pushes all the right buttons. Well-suited indeed. *Susanna Bolle*

**WILD DUB: DREAD MEETS PUNK ROCKER DOWNTOWN**

*Select Cuts/UK/CD*  
The second of Select Cuts' collections focusing on the fecund period in the late-'70s when the white sphere of punk and the black world of reggae and dub merged for a brief, desegregated moment, *Wild Dub* collects rare versions from major players of the era, namely The Slits, PIL, The Ruts, Grace Jones, and The Pop Group. Good as those are, it's the unlikely inclusion of dub-passes by The Pretty Things, Killing Joke, Generation X and 4 Be 2, however incoherent and guitar-heavy they are, that display a disorientingly bizarre soundclash at work. *Alexis Georgopoulos*



**ZERO DB: RECONSTRUCTION**

*Ubiquity/CD/US*  
Chris Vogado and Neil Combstock show a willful disregard for dancefloor etiquette on their collection of mixes and reshaping, as they lay down tracks that lead to serious mayhem between the speakers and under the mirrorball. With a rare combination of tough, squelchy techno basslines and exquisite batacuda polyrhythms, the sound is of barely restrained chaos held together by sheer momentum. Listening to their mix of Sun Ra, one realizes the intricately structured layers with which Zero dB deftly work, visceral reaction coming before conscious recognition. Artists here include Trüby Trio, Peace Orchestra, and Suba, and while all but two of the mixes here have appeared on singles, every rub has been tweaked and reset for this collection. A worthy introduction to the group, and a welcome prologue to their upcoming album. *Joe Rice*



**SCRATCHOLOGY: MIXED BY THE EXECUTIONERS**

*Sequence/US/CD*  
Hoping to release the definitive "history of the scratch" compilation, Sequence Records (home to other hip-hop DJ anthologies such as Dan The Automator's *Wanna Buy A Monkey?* and Babu's *Duck Season*) recruits the X-Ecutioners to put it down. One of the most visible crews in turntablism, the X-Ecutioners have graced the big screen (in Doug Pray's documentary *Scratch*), and even made it to MTV and arenas around the world with their Linkin Park duet. But more importantly, all three X-E members—Rob Swift, Roc Raida and Total Eclipse—put NYC turntablism on the map with their dope mix tapes and inventive battle routines. *Scratchology* covers most of the essential old school scratch cuts, including Grandmaster Flash's "The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steels" and Herbie Hancock's "Rock It," featuring Grandmaster DXT. Homage is paid to scratching's inventor, Grand Wizard Theodore ("Military Cut") and Philly's scratch innovator, Cash Money ("Ugly People Be Quiet"). The mid-'90s gets love with the inclusion of some funky scratch jams like 3<sup>rd</sup> Bass's "Product of the Environment" remix featuring DJ Richie Rich, while Q-Bert and D-Styles's "Razorblade Alcohol Slide" and the Beat Junkies' "Dilated Junkies" exhibit just how far the scratch has come with the very best virtuosos of our time flexing on the cut. Overall, *Scratchology* is a solid overview for anyone interested in the musical history of the turntable as an instrument. *DJ Anna*









She'll hit ya with two biscuits if ya fail to recognize: Pam the Funkstress

**HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS:**

**PAM THE FUNKSTRESS**  
 Make no mistake: back when conscious hip-hop made itself happen, the only West Coast artists that made waves like Public Enemy and KRS One were the East Bay's own Coup. And behind MCs Boots Riley and E Roc stood the mighty DJ Pam the Funkstress, one of the Bay Area's pioneering female scratch DJs, and no stranger to thumping fools who underestimated her battle skills. She provided the sonics behind the group's four albums, and, legendarily, perfected the art of scratching with her breasts. For those who don't know, the lady bought out the catering company for which she used to work, and now throws down a bangin' Sunday Cajun brunch in Foster City, just south of San Fran, that she cooks up her damn self (hit her up at pam@piccadillycatering.com when making Bay Area weekend plans). But watch your back: she still sets down those *other* kind of plates, and here's what she thinks of a few of 'em.

Ron Nachmann

**BRAVEHEARTS SITUATIONS**

*III Will-Columbia/US/12*  
 The lyrics are cool but it's the beat I was diggin', something you can ride to. Of course Nas stepped up and blessed the track, and there's no doubt that this goes right into rotation in my club set. *PTF*

**KILLER MIKE SCARED STRAIGHT**

*Aquamen-Columbia/US/12*  
 His lyrics tell a story that you can really feel and understand. Combine that with a hilarious hook and smooth it out over some Southern/West Coast-style beats, and you have the recipe for a bangin' joint. *PTF*

**LIL KIM & MR. CHEEKS THE JUMP OFF**

*Atlantic/US/12*  
 Yo, she's back! Risky lyrics? Of course, and they flow together with that always-hot Timbaland production like electricity and Benjamins (Franklin that is). Lace it with some Mr. Cheeks flav, and "Jump Off" your seat is the end result. *PTF*

**75 DEGREES CHILDREN'S STORY REDUX**

*Dining Room/US/12*  
 Not since Sticky Fingaz came to town has the world seen a more churlish MC than Rick Bond of 75 Degrees, a group bold enough to redo the kitschy rap standard "Children's Story" on their infectious new single. Then again, egghead humor's part of their appeal: check the track "Jesus Piece." *Rachel Swan*

**7L & ESOTERIC DO IT**

*Brick/US/12*  
 Today's special? White Rapper Beef. "Do It" is the answer to Cage's "Haterama," a one-verse Internet-only diss of battle vet Esoteric. On Cage's alleged drug use: "I know he does helium before he does flows." 7L crafts the perfect beat for Eso's verbal venom, but this record will be most enjoyed by fans familiar with this feud. *Ross Hogg*

**BLACK PANTHER PRESENTS... SUICIDE**

*Third Earth Music/US/12*  
 Horny for evil? Brooklyn DJ-turned-producer Black Panther hosts Pumpkinhead and C Rayz Walz on this dark double-sider. Pumpkinhead's tune, "Suicide," opens with frenetic scratching over a dark track accented by lush horns (RZA?). On the flip's "Expand 2," lifelong

activist and vegetarian C Rayz blazes a hyper-intelligent flow (GZA?) over 32nd-note hi-hats and sinister strings. *Ross Hogg*

**DAILY PLANNET WHY YOU WANNA**

*All Natural/US/12*  
 Chicago's twin rhymers Allstar and Spotlite enlist fellow vocal soldier Iomos Marad and producer Dug Infinite to follow up their masterful debut, "We Like to Party," with another banga. These kids just don't play when it comes to confident, laidback flows that dispense with haters and industry boosht. Backed by Dug Inf's smooth beats, the Daily's styles'll keep ya watchin' like Miramax. Tune in, sucka. *Ron Nachmann*

**DANGER MOUSE AND JEMINI**

*CONCEITED BASTARD EP Lex/UK/12*  
 Just another reason to suspect that the forthcoming Danger Mouse and Jemini LP will be the best release of 2003. So funky and soulful, DM is hip-hop's best-kept production secret right now. On bonafied club-banger "The Only One," he's enlisted a long-lost amazing rapper no-one's heard from in almost 10 years, and given him some amazing beats. The outcome is extraordinary. *Anna*

**KARDINAL OFFISHALL WITH PHARRELL WILLIAMS**

*BELLY DANCER MCA/US/12*  
 If Mad Lion were Canadian (and still making records), he'd be Kardinal Offishall. On "Belly Dancer," Mista KO from TO spits his patois-peppered rhymes over a sizzling Middle Eastern-flavored bashment track by the Neptunes (thought they told you that they won't stop). Buy doubles and run the riddim under a capellas for dancefloor madness. *Ross Hogg*

**LATEEF AND THE CHIEF PRESENT MAROONS**

*LESTER HAYES Quannum/US/12*  
 It's musical chairs in the Quannum camp, and this new formation includes Lateef the Truth Speaker (Latelyx) on the mic and Chief X-Cel (Blackalicious) on beats. X's production just keeps improving, and this 12" testifies to his true funkiness. And Lateef comes with the best hip-hop chorus out now. *Anna*

**MASTA KILLA DIGI WARFARE**

*Nature Sounds/US/12*  
 Your boy Elgin Turner, the ninth member of that Wu bunch (who are 'bout to cut a contract with Tariq Aziz, I hear), gets loose old-school style on an uptempo Eric B-ish rhythm laced with scratch noise and electric cowbell. On the

flip's "No Said Date," the tempo remains up, and the Killa flows with that inimitable subtlety alongside those sweet Wu strings, lettin' ya know that if "truth be the life preserver, ya can't drown." No, the Wu hasn't gone anywhere, and yet they're still back. *Ron Nachmann*

**MYSTIC NO COMPETITION**

*Goodvibes/US/12*  
 "Pull a baller? That's a threesome with their ego." Mystic brings the realism for would-be suitors (and, yes, sucker MCs) over a rock-guitar-fueled beat by Native Tongue collaborator Supa Dave West. The Oakland songbird proves once again that femininity does not equal weakness. The flip, "That's Right," is a mellow manifesto produced by underground king Ge-ology. *Ross Hogg*

**VARIABLE UNIT HANDBOOK FOR THE APOCALYPSE**

*Wide Hive/US/12*  
 Live hip-hop? Stop rolling your eyes and open your ears. VU proves that organic can be a healthy alternative. "Handbook for the Apocalypse" finds Azeem speaking on signs of the times over a sweeping guitar/acoustic bass/keyboard arrangement. The b-side's "We Are at War" features SF turntablist helion and DJ Quest cutting over a laid-back jazzy groove. *Ross Hogg*

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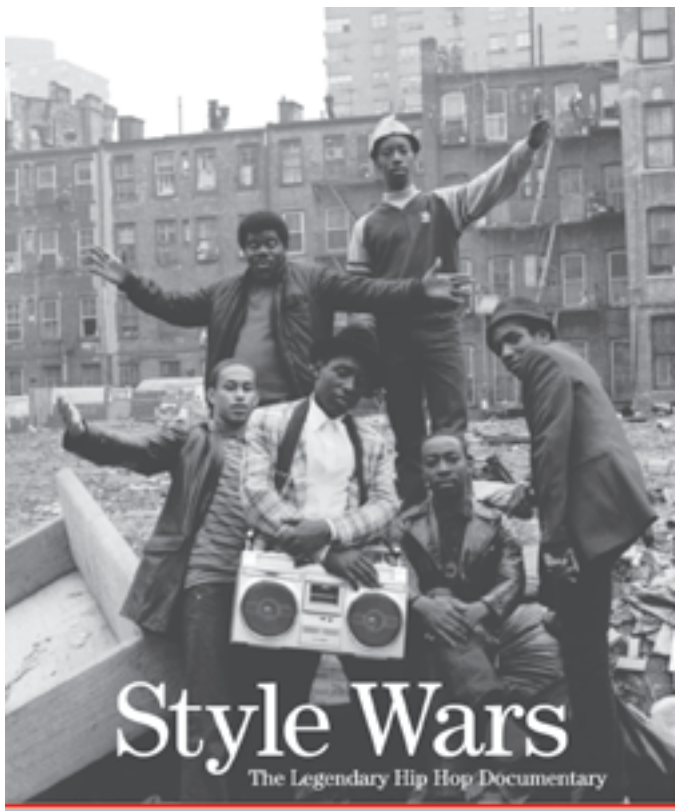
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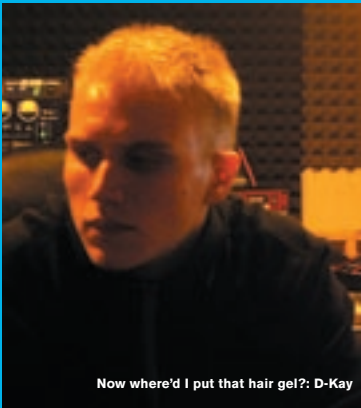


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**DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS: D-KAY**

The popularity of non-UK-produced drum & bass is reaching fever pitch this year, and 23-year-old D-Kay is right in the center of things. From his homebase in Vienna, he's crafted diverse tunes for Cylon, Moving Shadow, Renegade and Hospital, striking gold with anthems like the epic stormer "Be There 4 U" (with partner Rawfull) and the sultry, summery "Barcelona." Fresh from the studio, we polled D-Kay—whose influences range from Brahms to Nirvana—about this month's blazing hot jams. *Star Eyes*

**PENDULUM TRAIL OF SEVENS**

*Hardware/UK/12*  
Coming from Australia, these boys know how to fire up the dance. "Trail of Sevens" is an epic tune, starting off with a nice melodic intro and a simple but effective arpeggio-style sound, just to drop into funk-up Reese-ness with some punchy beats and bass. *D-K*

**FRESH THE DALEKS**

*Breakbeat Kaos/UK/12*  
Having been a badman for a long time now, Fresh simply knows his studio, and it always reaches the dancefloor. "The Daleks" gets the party started—twisted up synth-hooks and bass meet clashing drums. If you liked "Torpedo," you'll love this. *D-K*

**ED RUSH & OPTICAL BULLIT**

*Virus/UK/12*  
True aliens in every respect, Ed Rush & Optical string together tracks with a certain inescapable mystique. "Bullit" takes a step back from this duo's signature synth escapades, as they sample funky horns and jazzy stabs to keep this tune rolling inna nice disco vibe. *D-K*

**ARQER & REALTIME/BENJAMIN SAGE**

*BATTERY/ALL ABOUT YOU Gain/UK/12*  
**ARQER & REALTIME LUCID DREAM**  
*Monkey Business/US/12*  
Houston duo ArQer and Realtime keep their roll on, following up bits on Renegade Hardware and Dsci4 with "Battery," a broad, old-school-flavored jogger that shares split-single space with Ben Sage's soulful mash-down on the Gain label. They then launch their Monkey Business label with a single that sports a jumpy, techy title tune with roaring synths and a tumbling rhythm, while the flip's "B Wit U" runs soulfully, with tinges of Detroit in the synth stabs. Bottom line: these kids iz versatile. *Ron Nachmann*

**BARON EFFORTLESS CHIC**

*Trouble on Vinyl/UK/12*  
Oxford's Baron unleashes another scorcher in this title track, which dances old-school analog chaos-computer bleeps over a hard, funky rhythm and simplified bassline. The flip's "School Disco" offers buzzy synths over another sharp beat without getting sloppy, making this one a double-A killer. *Ron Nachmann*

**BULLETPROOF GUN RUNNER**

*Cyanide/NZ/12*  
The seventh release from New Zealand's Cyanide imprint finds things just getting better. "Gun Runner" is a subtle stepper built on dark textures, a pumping beat and a spiraling bassline. The equally hypnotizing flip, "Seduction," moves at a lightning-quick pace, as Bulletproof takes the techno-funk sound to a much deeper level, producing an exquisite thriller. *Chris Muniz*

**CRIDGE & TASHA GWAN NOW!!**

*Tribe/UK/12*  
Dave Cridge, head of Bristol's Tribe imprint, teams up with American DJ Tasha to let ya know that drum & bass has well retained its ragga roots. Rugged, subtly placed vocal samples, half-time chords and them damn sirens decorate the buzz-bass-&Amen scheme of the title tune, while the flip's "Cuban Lingo" hands over skillfully arranged, conga-heavy Latin flavor. *Ace. Ron Nachmann*

**HARDWARE CHRONICLES VOL. 1 EP**

*Renegade Hardware/UK/12*  
Hardware comes big, bad and heavy on this EP, where the new signings bring the fire. Raiden delivers blistering '97-Metalheadz boom, as dark stalwart Dylan commits death-metal d&b to wax

once more. Rob F serves up quality Conflict-style tech fare, but upstart ArQer steals the show with a number that melds trancey synths and r&b vocals with a blistering Bad Company-esque blistering bass growl. Ouch! *Star Eyes*

**MARK XTC ROLLIN BEATZ/KEYS**

*Beatz/UK/12*  
Mark XTC, formerly of Da Intalex (with pal Marcus) returns for this Valve offshoot. "Rollin' Beatz" is an apt title for this A-side, in which a '95 bassline pairs up with a pitched-down Amen for some extremely minimal hardstep business. The flip's "Keys" pinches a wonky piano intro from Dillinja and hits it with some pounding one-two punches. More DJ tools than fleshed-out tunes, these tracks would be perfect with an a capella laid over them, but are pretty boring on their own. *Star Eyes*

**MIND, BODY & SOUL: PHASE 3**

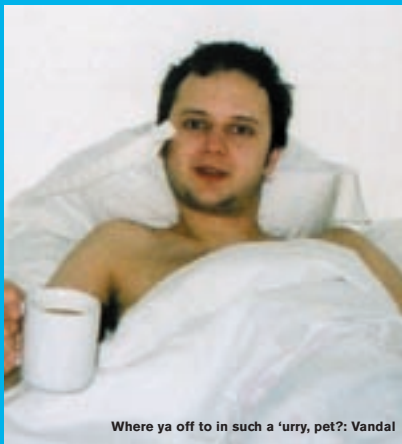
*Defunked/UK/2x12*  
From Calibre's smooth and hypnotic "Brother" to Kaleb's hard-edged soul-fusion on "Count on Me," Defunked has obviously saved the best for last in its high-powered *Mind, Body & Soul* series. Carito contributes to the cause with the epic, Rhodes-driven "Turn It Up" before Funk 'n' Flex brings "Walk By Faith," with a top-notch production centered on the sublime vocals of David Holness and Ed Funk on drums. Definitely coming to a dancefloor near you—look out! *Chris Muniz*

**QUAD 2 EP**

*Function/UK/2x12*  
Part two of the Quad double-pack series represents with a surprisingly diverse array of sounds. Digital and newcomer NJC groove out with the Latin-tinged "Open Up" before Digital cracks skulls on the ragga-ish "Creation." Concord Dawn lay down the law with yet another breath-taking anthem, "Tonight," then Amit sets the speakers on fire with the aptly-titled "Dub Soldier." Huge business from the Function camp—one to snatch on sight! *Chris Muniz*

**TINFED DANGERGIRL REMIXES**

*Volta Vinyl/US/12*  
Indie rock and punk meets drum & bass on the second release from upstarts Volta Vinyl. Pieter K turns in an esoteric, carefully constructed, Photek-esque workout, while Sacramento's Fruitbat presents a futuristic, low-key techno ride. Echo turns out the real dancefloor flavor here, whipping through an airy, trancey number underpinned by a serious bassline. Quality favors! *Star Eyes*



**BREAKS GUEST REVIEWS: VANDAL**

Step aside and let your man Sam Vandal through, 'cause he's seems ready to build the UK breaks nation on his own. Vandal runs the prolific Plastic Raygun label, whose 2003 schedule will see releases from both established acts like Stabilizer, Peo De Pitte and Phantom Beats, alongside releases from new artists like Napt and Mulder (not to mention the debut Stabilizer album, due in October).

Following up on last year's electro-tinged killer "The Seeker," Vandal's got two more singles of his own on tap for 2003, along with remixes for label-mate Stabilizer, Canada's 2 Wars label, Swiss label Ritmic, and Spanish imprint Breakbeat Boom. Other than that, you'll see him touring Europe through the end of the year. So how the hell did we get him to comment on his favorite current breaks jammies? We don't remember—we probably promised he could break a couple of our windows. *Ron Nachmann*

**BLIM & RENNIE PILGREM FEAT. MC CHICKABOO 2 FREAKS**

*TCR/UK/12*  
Big electro synths + even bigger drums + the excellent MC Chikaboo = break-beat anthem. Very funky and incredibly catchy. Would work just as well on the radio as it would on the dancefloor. This could be massive. *V*

**PRECISION CUTS MIRACLE**

*Simple/UK/12*  
Quality release from my favorite new label. The excellent Precision Cuts head for the dancefloor with "Miracle." Great rolling breaks, squelching acid lines and lush synths mixed together with the Cuts magic formula. A must for fans of this label and artist. *V*

**TOK TOK VS SOFFYO DAY OF MINE (STARECASE RMX)**

*Eastwest/UK/12*  
These boys program drums like surgeons perform operations—so precise and clinical. Add plenty of funk, nice vocals and the trademark Starecase atmospheric, and you've a great breaks track for the summer. The best Starecase work so far. *Class. V*

**BENGA & SCREAM THE JUDGEMENT**

*Big Apple Records/UK/12*  
This Croydon teenage duo justifies the underground hype about their warped basslines, as they unleash a growling, stuttering monster that laces an *Omen*-style choir over some conga-pounding tech-garage tribalism. Guilty as charged! *kode9*

**CONTAX HITLIST**

*Nerve Breaks/UK/12*  
Hip-hop accents galore—electro cowbells and keyboard chords, hardcore vocal lines, etc.—enhance the big bassline and varied rhythms of this one, which gets a sleeker, darker remix by Paul Reset. A big, bad jam from this Glasgow label. *Ron Nachmann*

**DND FEAT. SWEETIE IRIE & GAPPY RANKS**

*160 ON THE HIGHWAY DND PICK IT UP DND/UK/12*  
DND's contribution to the recent ragga crop, "160 on the Highway," fairly sizzles with siren noises, serious strings, a manic 4/4 and grimy vocals. Flipping the script for "Pick It Up," Qualifide delivers a housey remix that retains edgy 2-step touches, despite its jazzy sax and vocals. The flip contains a more straightforward house chug, with a mid-'90s classic UKG flavor that sounds oh so right. *Star Eyes*

**DJ QUEST OIL DRUM**

*Mechanoise/UK/12*  
It's Quest from the UK, not the SF scratch hamster, so keep your shorts on. "Oil Drum" goes the straight-ahead nu-breaks route, buzzing a three-note bassline over a thumping beat with bits of space-vacuum noise flitting about. The flip's more electro-tinged "The Raid" offers up the same hot, dark sounds, but unfortunately suffers an over-working of its vocal sample. Still, solid stuff for the floor. *Ron Nachmann*

**GEMMA FOX MESSY**

*white/UK/12*  
Up 'n' coming vocalist Gemma Fox delivers it in r&b rude gal fashion, with a more-shrill-than-Ms.-Dynamite flow over rough, bassline biz that coils around the words. The catchy hook—"So messy, so damn messy!"—will stick in your ears for days. Don't fight it, just buy it! *Star Eyes*

**GHETTO MONKEY/CENTRAL EXPORT**

*Ghetto People/Danger With Music Unstable/UK/12*  
London's eclectic Jermaine Rodriguez becomes Ghetto Monkey, and puts Glen "Future Funk Squad" Nicholls behind the board to roll a nice, straight-ahead, ragga-tinged breaks stormer on this split 12." With its rudimentary vocal samples, spare rhythm and keyboard chords, Central Export's "Danger With Music" takes an almost Tackhead route, making this slab essential. *Ron Nachmann*

**HIGH PLANES DRIFTER VS. GOLDSLOT/HORSE-POWER PRODUCTIONS**

*Sholay/TGS Remix Tempa/UK/12*  
Lights out for the summer. "Sholay" is downtempo, and reminiscent of "Snakecharmer" (but better), with glistening bells, Indian percussion and laced with haunting Bollywood vox. On the flip, "TGS" caresses you with shimmering synth and teases with blaxploitation threats, before dropping you right in the bass chamber. Essential! *kode9*

**PLASTICMAN THE LIFT**

*Road/UK/12*  
Who said we were post-industrial? Plasticman is part of a new school of young, post-"Pulse X" producers delivering militant, electro-inflected minimalism. "Printloop" on the flip is the standout here, opening with, yes, looped printout samples and dropping into proper bleeps and bass. For MCs and Front 242 fans alike. *kode9*

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Fully enjoying that clean country air: Zero dB's Chris Vogado (L) helps master Neil Combstock with the deep breathing techniques.

**FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS: CHRIS VOGADO OF ZERO DB**

In many ways in this e-music game, it's about the remix. Ask Zero dB, whose first full length, *Reconstructions*—like that of fellow nu-jazz experts Jazzanova—collects a truckload of remixes they've done for the likes of Trüby Trio, Peace Orchestra, and even Sun Ra. But hold up, cuz it's also about releasing your own original stuff on your own label, as ZdB's Chris Vogado (a.k.a. The Vogado Project) and Neil Combstock (a.k.a. Frank de Jojo) do on the regular on their Fluid Ounce imprint, alongside material by John Kong + Moonstarr, and Carmel. Plenty of stuff on your man Vogado's plate, and plenty of platters on his decks. What's he feelin'? *Ron Nachmann*

**BENNY B PRESENTS THE BIZ SATISFACTION**

*Energy Production/UK/12*  
F\*ck me, probably the strongest house/acid thing I've heard in years, with more filters than you can shake a stick at. The Mac vocal might put this in that pseudo Francophile/electro/jazz stream, but even the hardest hip-hop heads will be climbing the walls by the end. *CV*

**JOHN ARNOLD ANACONDA**

*Ubiquity/US/12*  
For those of us who doubted nu-jazz's staying power, Detroit's Mr. Arnold opens a can of Oh No You Fucking Don't. "Anaconda" finds him lacing a crisp and quick Afrobeat-style rhythm with some techno synth action, while on the flip he offers up a boosted cover of Herbie Hancock's criminally overlooked "Rough," in which he lands vocalist Ayro into a forest of pure wah. Rude for the dancefloor. *Ron Nachmann*

**BAKURA REACH THE SKY**

*Especial/JPN/12*  
Three years on, broken beat is an established genre with club nights around the world relying on a supply of singles, like this sublime new Domu collaboration with Robert Marin. Bakura's tracks create tension by stripping down the mix: only the necessary computerized bass, vintage synths and twitchy beats fill in these galactic samba bogies. Well forward. *Tomas*

**BINGO PALACE LIVE AT THE BINGO PALACE**

*IN FLAGRANTI SUPEREGO*  
*Codek/US/12*  
New York's Codek label keeps it raunchy for summer. As Bingo Palace, Fa Ventilato and Frank Heer bring a uniquely psychedelic and sound-

tracky vibe to the largely beatless "Live...", which Sasha "Cosmic Rocker" Crnobrnja laces with a subtle Afro-Latin rhythm and bubbly synth bits. Crnobrnja twists and breaks that rhythmic style with Alex Gloor as In Flagranti, offering up semi-house movement with "Superego" and tropical percussion madness with the flip's "Hairy Fruit." Sweaty. *Ron Nachmann*

**BLAZE FEAT. AMIRA I THINK OF YOU**

*Slip 'n' Slide/UK/12*  
This is what I'm talkin' about. Jersey house legends hand over their 4/4 downtempo soul spotlight with *la chanteuse* Amira to Phil Asher's Restless Soul project for a funky quiet-storm remix, and Sweden's Redtop for a fierce '80s-soul rub. Magic. When will these guys finally be huge in the US? *Ron Nachmann*

**BROWNTempo HOMAGE**

*Rhythm and Culture/US/12*  
Eighteenth St. Lounge associate Desmond Williams and Avatars of Dub's Philip Brooks launch their DC-based Rhythm and Culture imprint with two smoking Latin jams. "Homage" runs a deadly downtempo rhythm under the salsa, while "Querida Vida" goes the percussive uptempo route with solid results. An auspicious debut. *Ron Nachmann*

**ANDREA PARKER & DAVID MORELY GAME OVER**

*Touchin Bass/UK/12*  
Terminator-sounding samples with pure 808 and 303 usage throughout, leading you to dark places you shouldn't venture to that often. "Tour de France" meets Carl Craig's La Funk Mob outing? One for the heavy set, and seriously recommended. *CV*

**QUANTIC OFF THE BEATEN TRACK (CARMEL RMX)**

*Tru Thoughts/UK/12*  
Holy doody!! The main man that has remixed too many gets some of his own treatment. Forget about giving up cigarettes, this will make you start (again), period. Carmel from Budapest keeps you guessing with his hard beats and cut-up samples. Literally a floor-filler...watch them. *CV*

**RISE ASHEN EARTH DRAGON EP PT.1**

*Fossil Fuel/UK/12*  
"Rock This Beat" sounds awesome on one of "those" sound systems—you know the type where your trousers are flapping to the bass. The super super sub-low-end and general feel of this beauty lends itself to either a warm-up before it all kicks off in a big club, or one of those sweaty get-down tracks in a smaller dingy atmosphere—either way it sounds real good. Should drop a treat at Co-op. Move your feet. *CV*

**J MAGE CRAZY HEART**

*Listen Labs/US/12*  
San Francisco keyboardist Jeremy Mage lines up some formidable local talent to bust on some jazzmatic uptempo breakbeat jams. The solid rocks here are drummers Eric Garland, Valentino Pellizzer-Selgado and Marivaldo Dos Santos, who provide the backbone for some cool, seriously horny dubwise arrangements. *Ron Nachmann*

**KEMETIC JUST MINSTREL SPEAK**

*Diaspora/UK/12*  
Atlanta house production duo Kemetic Just meet our demands for music with a message by allowing Philly's spoken-wordologist Rich Medina some space to comment on both "bling" and race. Sweet Abraham's rework opens with Lady Alma invoking the spirits before a rugged, low-riding, offbeat riddim drops. Even Gil Scot would approve of these soul techniques. *Tomas*

**NUTMEG FEAT. FACE STATE OF MIND**

*Neroli/IT/12*  
**COSMO PRESENTS CHI FEAT. BILLIE GODFREY MISTAKEN**  
*Bitches Brew/UK/12*  
Nutmeg bucks trends by shuffling the rhythmic deck, as Face's clear vocal directives pierce

through the tune's lovely stabbing Rhodes. Pure blues for restless feet. Chi steps 'cross with a late-night, last-one-out-the-pub house ballad that gets rubbed raw on the B by Alix Alvarez's dutty flex. No time for stress, 'cause gems like these gonna work it all out. *Tomas*

**FIONA RENSHAW WASTE AWAY**

*Laws of Motion/UK/12*  
Laws of Motion look to shed the strictures of nu-jazz legacy with signings like Tom Noble and this powerful singer/songwriter/guitarist. Ms. Renshaw gives her passionate original A-side a gutsy downtempo beat treatment, and leaves her flipside cover of Gil Scot-Heron's "Home is Where the Hatred Is" beatless and huge. *Ron Nachmann*

**SPASMO CORONER'S REPORT**

*Direct Source/FRA/12*  
Producers Neil Sanford and Endeavour roll some downtempo acoustic cinematic jazz for that azz. "Half Man, Half Dead"'s twinkling vibes, sinewy bass and acoustic guitar spell sheer anxiety, as does the calm military funk of "Official Business," while "Silhouette City" skirts spaghetti-western territory without going corny, and "A Siders Touch" keeps the Schifrin vibe rollin' into dimly lit streets. *Ron Nachmann*

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COK002: **BAM BAM "HEAD TRAUMA"**  
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**LEFTFIELD GUEST REVIEWS: RAS KUSH**

When ya talk about New York's roots reggae scene, you're talking about the city's hardest selecta, Brooklyn's Ras KUSH. Many people in town know him as that skinny, soft-spoken dread putting on tunes at the counter some days at Jammyland, Manhattan's premiere reggae specialist shop. But as part of Black Redemption Sound System, KUSH has been edutaining Gotham's massive in a Shaka style for most of his thirtysomething years. KUSH currently holds court at Dub Supreme on Sunday nights at Joe's Pub on Lafayette St. and various spots around town. He also runs the Black Redemption label, which debuted with a banging stepper 7-inch sung by Glen Brown called "We Dem a Watch," continued with CDs by BR in session and by Peter Kruud, and will step next with "Rise Up" by Peter Kruud & Ranking Joe. Check a righteous New Yawk ting at blackredemption.com, and check what tunes a run at the hands of KUSH. *Ron Nachmann*

Mon, look up! Ya know me on top inna dis: Ras KUSH posts up

Lafayette St. and various spots around town. He also runs the Black Redemption label, which debuted with a banging stepper 7-inch sung by Glen Brown called "We Dem a Watch," continued with CDs by BR in session and by Peter Kruud, and will step next with "Rise Up" by Peter Kruud & Ranking Joe. Check a righteous New Yawk ting at blackredemption.com, and check what tunes a run at the hands of KUSH. *Ron Nachmann*

**JULIAN MARLEY SYSTEMS**

*Ghetto Youths International/US/12*

An exceptionally well produced composition. Julian delivers a strong message song complemented by a perfectly rootsy rhythm track. This is a crucial cut that I recommend you look out for. *RK*

**PRINCE MALACHI CAN'T CONTROL**

*Stingray/UK/12*

Currently a favorite amongst modern roots lovers. "Can't Control" is a positive anthem of resistance and survival—the lyrics are well thought out and clearly delivered. Malachi does it again. *RK*

**PHASE SELECTOR SOUND THE SOUND OF TBLCLTHS**

*Lush/SWE/12*

Very adventurous/avantgarde-type dubwise tracks. As the dub sound system movement forwards in America, releases such as this one show that this country contains some authentic talent and originality. *RK*

**!!! ME AND GIULIANI DOWN BY THE SCHOOL YARD (A TRUE STORY)**

*Touch and Go/US/12*

This eight-piece Gang of Explanation Marks knows exactly where to take that stomach-churning urge for self-aware, No-Wave-tinged, Caucasoist post-punk-funk—to the motherfuckin' bridge, y'all! Long, intriguing jams both, "Me..." and the flipside's eye-rollingly named Sunracapellctroschit Mix of "Intensifieder" comprise a refreshingly groovy flame put to nu-synthpop's oversprayed hairdo. *Ron Nachmann*

**CAURAL BLURRED JULY EP**

*Chocolate Industries/US/12*

Zachary Mastoon is lost in the cornfields and abandoned factory rows of America's Midwest with only an MPC 3000 as his compass. Like DJ Shadow's early works, these three lush, romantic, deconstructed hip-hop instrumentals and one vocal cut with MC Diverse reach out in the dark, longing for connection with some familiar soul. Reach out for this. *Tomas*

**THE HACKER DANSE INDUSTRIA**

*Turbo/CAN/12*

**MY ROBOT FRIEND WALT WHITMAN**

*Dekathlon/GER/12*

On to more Electro Body Music, then. France's favorite Gigolo returns with trademark aplomb, locating "Danse Industria" squarely between Nitzer Ebb and Shannon's "Let the Music Play." Meanwhile, NYC's My Robot Friend follows up the excellent "Fake EP" with the facile let-down that is "Walt Whitman." Or perhaps it's just that the novelty of '80s *primifit* has worn off, already. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

**JAYLIB THE OFFICIAL**

*Stones Throw/US/12*

You don't necessarily hear music made by Jay Dee and Mad Lib—you feel it. They're too busy living the moment with wobbly jazz loops, drunken snares, dirty handclaps and lyrics that tell it like it

**LUCKY 13**  
REVIEWS BY TOPH ONE

I'm so straight sometimes it just hurts. And I don't mean the hetero kind of straight. Just this: for all the protest marches and spray paint and revolutionary banter, I still nap on the couch on Saturday afternoons watching NASCAR and dream about muscle cars on the beach blasting Metallica. Anyway, I just woke up and actually *read* the latest issue of *XLR8R*, and let me tell you—reading your own magazine is a *good thing!* Who is this Bitter Bastard guy?! And why is he never at the staff meetings? (Oh, that's *me* who's never at the staff meetings.) Well, I was going to rant on about all these shaggy-haired trucker-hat wearing *Vice* clones skateboarding around town wishing they were from Brooklyn, but I see we already have a column for that kind of bad attitude. Instead I'll focus on the Good. And after a shit winter, the Giants have come out swinging big, and it looks like there will be plenty to spin this fine summer. Too much good stuff to mention: Tommy Guerrero's "Thank You MK" (a paean to artist Margaret Kilgallen) off his latest album, *Soul Food Taqueria*, with the killer Espo cover art...beautiful Philly soul on Kindred's "Spread The Word" EP...fresh flows from our man L-Roneous on his "From Under A Cloud" EP...Calagad 13's rocking "Catch The Flow" single on Germany's MZee label...and Masta Ace, you are my hero! Happy hunting...

- 1) PROZACK TURNER "RESTAURANT QUALITY LEMONADE"** (*Dreamworks/US/12ep*) If these Foreign Legion cats don't watch out, folks are gonna start taking them REAL seriously. From the Pete Rock-produced "Wonderful Life" through DJ Design's bouncing "Like That Y'all" (complete with kazoo solos) to Genessee's two shining stars, Prozack whips his lyrics around like Devo and spits *verse*. Bang it.
- 2) IN FLAGRANTI "SUPEREGO"** (*Codek/US/12*) While the title track is waaaay too banging for me, the flipside, "Hairy Fruit," is perfect Red Wine music, a slow building carnival in your ear-hole. Enough time to fill your pitcher with sangria, kiss the bartender and shuffle your way back to the decks. Excellent.
- 3) SOUL FOLK "BROTHERFROMANOTHPLANET"** (*Dreamtree Entertainment/US/12ep*) Three tracks of summertime soul from multi-talented San Francisco performer Will Hammond, formerly of Midnight Voices. From the first beautiful keys of "Life Goes On," you can feel you're in for something special. And the remix of "The Beginning" with that Wild Style beat? What DID ever happen to Son of Bazerk? Welcome back, Willie!
- 4) STONES THROW (US/label)** Here's your set, right here: Madlib's "Galt Suite #7" off his new 7", into Jaylib's "The Official," into Wildchild's dope "Code Red", into J.Rocc's masterpiece "Play This." What kind of vitamins is Peanut Butter Wolf feeding these guys? I want some!
- 5) MOBB DEEP "IT'S OVER"** (*Landspeed/US/12*) Remember that scene in *Rocky* where those cats are huddled around a 55-gallon drum, burning pallets and singing doo-wop? "Take you back-a-doo-do-do-do-a-take you baaaack..." If that movie were made today, it'd be Mobb Deep rhyming slick over this buttery Havoc beat. Lovely.
- 6) VU (VARIABLE UNIT) "HANDBOOK FOR THE APOCALYPSE"** (*Wide Hive/US/12*) What happened to rebel music? Punk is a pop joke on MTV, 90% of rap music is commercial fodder, and the best rock is instrumental. Enter Greg Howe and his Variable Unit project with the prophetic words of Azeem. Haunting and all too timely.
- 7) LATEEF AND THE CHIEF PRESENT MAROONS "LESTER HAYES"** (*Quannum/US/12*) Good God. It sounds like the SoleSides crew went back to Davis, rolled around in a cow pasture, cracked open a few tall-boys of Schlitz and cut loose in the studio. Holy shit! You will know me this summer—I'll be the one rocking this beast every chance I get. This is fucking MUSIC! Malt liquor's on me, fellas!
- 8) LES NUBIANS "TEMPERATURE RISING" (FEAT. TALIB KWELI)** (*OmTown/US/12*) Beautiful. Almost perfect. Gabriel Rene mix for the clubs, album version for the parks and beaches. Go to it.
- 9) MUTATION MANN REVERSE TECHNIQUES 2003 (mix/US/CD)** DJ Quest hooks up the multi-track and gets ridiculously bumpable on his latest mix CD. Jazz horns, reverse loops, old-school breaks and dark electro vibes undergo the wizard treatment and come out perplexed. Don't try this at home. On second thought, ONLY try this at home.
- 10) MALOSI "MALOSI"** (*white/US/12ep*) Strange things end up in the record bag after really good loft parties: little bags of weed, an envelope of questionable white powder, half-full bottles of bad rum...Days later you unload everything and try to piece the night back together. Sometimes, if you're lucky, something like this will appear—a lush album of instrumental hip-hop *songs*, laced with enough low-end to rid the block of roaches for life. Look for it, and peep the final product, blessed with vocals by Hawaii's Jundax.
- 11) CATS "AMERICAN MILITARY OPERATIONS"** (*CatFive/US/7*) Leave it to Oakland's audio alchemists to plunder the airwaves for political and war-related banter, along with a healthy dose of nonsense by way of Mexican porn and past US presidents. Side A is a perfect intro track, laying a slow framework for whatever madness you care to dish out, while the b-side tracks from the inside out and is full of snippets to snag. "Tools for the Mind," indeed.
- 12) LOCOMOTIVE & SWAN "WAY OUT HERE..."** (*Ruff/US/12*) Think sweaty girls in sequined cowboy hats. Think a thousand people in a basement with nothing but a single red light dangling from a cord. Think outlaw fun.

**LUCKY 13) MALATESTA "CRITICAL BEATS"** (*EntarteteKunst/US/12ep*) Dark, heavy anarcho-downtempo beats and samples. This is the soundtrack to Noam Chomsky driving a steamroller over the White House. For more on Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta visit [www.akpress.org](http://www.akpress.org) and buy some killer books while you're at it!

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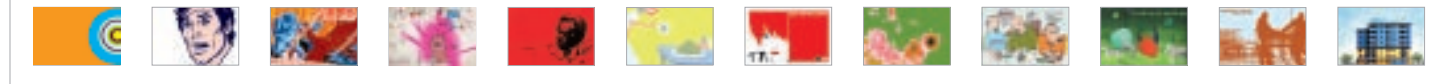


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>> ...THESE YOUNG PUNK BANDS HAVE NOTICED HOW ELECTRONIC MUSIC CAN MAKE GIRLS DANCE, AND THEN THEY'RE LIKE "OH, LETS DO THAT."

# IN THE STUDIO GOLD CHAINS

BLOWING UP THE BOOMBOX WITH HIS LAPTOP AMMO, GOLD CHAINS LETS US IN ON THE SECRETS OF HIS MISSION DISTRICT STUDIO-IN-A-CLOSET.

Is he a punk? Is he a laptop programmer? Is he a rapper? Is he famous? People ask lots of questions about San Francisco MC and musician Gold Chains. Chains—or Topher Lafata if you're family—recently signed to international label PIAS (check the album *Young Miss America*, out now) after releasing incendiary material on the glitch-tastic imprint Orthlorng Musork (see America's 20 Best Underground Labels in this issue). But more importantly, Lafata brings the party (and a giant boombox) with him wherever he performs—like a brainier, digital Andrew W.K. (sans the hessen coif), Chains is off the chain. So how did this young man, who freelances as a software programmer by day, go from garage-band noisemaker to sharp-tongued, internationally traveling political mic-thrasher? The answer lies in the mix.

**XLR8R:** *Did you employ a different production approach on Young Miss America as compared with your earlier Gold Chains recordings?*

**Gold Chains:** I think (co-producer) Josh (Kit Clayton) and I are becoming better producers, but basically a lot of it had to do with getting better [studio] monitors. I moved the studio out of a closet and into a bigger room in my apartment, so now I'm able to hear frequencies a lot better.

**XLR8R:** *Did you use different equipment?*

**GC:** Maybe a little bit, but it's always like whatever's around [in the studio at that time]. Like we brought a Rhodes over [from Josh's house], an [electric] Pianette and a Clavinette, and I used the Akai AX-60 a lot [a favorite synth of C.J. Bolland and Seefeel-Ed], which sounds really electric and crappy, but it sounds good. We used the Virus a little bit and a bunch of analog shit.

**XLR8R:** *The album definitely sounds like you were playing real keyboards and synths as opposed to software that mimics them.*

**GC:** The other records [I've produced] might have sounded a little more like that, but the production was just different. I think the other records sound a little muddy, a little too mid-rangey to me. But [*Young Miss America*] has [all the frequencies] in there, and we used a lot of acoustic sounds, and that shit just fills it out. Like if you put a piano in something, it just fits in [the mix] nicely.

**XLR8R:** *What gear do you bring on the road when you play live?*

**GC:** Just a [laptop running] a [Cycling 74] MAX-MSP patch that I made—but I just re-made it. I'll have to show you it, it's super-cool. So my computer is running it, but Sue [Costible—Gold Chains's vocal and visuals touring partner] also has it on her interface. We hook both computers together with an Ethernet cable, so we're actually in the same [mixing and performing] environment. But what I'm finding is that when you're singing, it's really hard to also be dubbing shit out. So we arrange the songs a little differently when we play live.

**XLR8R:** *Do you bring your guitar on the road?*

**GC:** When I tour the US, I probably will. I'd like to bring the guitar, a floor tom, a snare, a cymbal and a synthesizer. I also made this part of the MAX patch where you can hit a button and [the virtual synth] just starts soloing algorithmically in a certain key, just spitting out MIDI—it's not really too coherent yet, though. It's kind of a hard problem, trying to get a computer to "make" music. I made the patch so that the live show will be more dynamic. [With this patch] I'll do four mix-down parts of a song—one will be just drums, one will be bass and one will be miscellaneous. And then you just define cues, which enables me to click to the bassline from the end of the song, and then to the drums from the beginning or bring in the strings from this other part—kind of like a remix on the fly. Everything is just one mouse click, rather than scrolling through menus.

**XLR8R:** *Describe your studio.*

**GC:** I have a Soundcraft Ghost [mixing] console, an Avalon pre-amp to do vocals through. I use a Lexicon reverb, and an Ensoniq DP/4 parallel effects processor for effects. For keyboards I use a Waldorf XT, and the Virus [a great source of info on the Virus can be found at [www.musical-keyboard-guide.com/virus-keyboards.html-Ed](http://www.musical-keyboard-guide.com/virus-keyboards.html-Ed)] and the Roland 909 and 303. I use Logic Platinum to sequence.

**XLR8R:** *How long have you been doing music?*

**GC:** Since I was 14. You know, hardcore, skate rock, that was the first thing I was into. Then I got into Wax Trax [label] stuff, like Ministry and Front 242. In 1993, I went to my first warehouse party down in San Diego, and that's when I started feeling the "club love." Even before that, though, I had like all kinds of UK rave comps, from 1990-91, like *This Is Techno*. I never wanted to put out [my own] music until I thought it was good. So my first proper release was the Orth thing—*Gold Chains EP*.

**XLR8R:** *How long have you lived San Francisco's Mission District?*

**GC:** About six years.

**XLR8R:** *Talk about the Mission District aesthetic of sharing gear, recycling gear and finding stuff on the street?*

**GC:** I've never been into that myself. The only person I trade gear with is Josh. But in general I don't know what's up with the Mission aesthetic. I think a lot of it is these young punk bands have noticed how electronic music can make girls dance, and then they're like "oh, lets do that." So now there's all these shitty retro-electronic punk bands. We'll see if they stick with it.

**XLR8R:** *There's a lot of token keyboard players being added to former emo and indie rock bands.*

**GC:** You know, that can be cool if people are making good music.

Young Miss America is out now on PIAS Records. [www.pias.com](http://www.pias.com)



In Gold Chains' studio: (top) Virus with Keyboard; (middle-from left) Roland TR-909, Roland MC-303, Waldorf XT keyboard, Ensoniq DP/4 parallel effects processor; (bottom) Soundcraft Ghost mixing console



>> IF THE TRACK'S GOOD AND THE ARRANGEMENT'S GOOD, IT ACTUALLY DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO IT.



Tom Olcham

Real head-turners: Landslide, London Elektriccity and Chris Goss of Hospital Records

## SHORT CIRCUIT: LONDON ELEKTRICITY

Exceptional songwriters in the drum & bass scene are about as rare as Aphrodite fans over the age of 30. Fact is, most d&b producers' tracks lurk in the realm of go-nowhere tear-out drum loops, which is fine for those dark, moody warehouse sessions. But only a few mixers—like John B, Roni Size, Marcus Intalex and Addiction—have a true sense of composition and musicality. Add to that list pretty much anyone on London-based Hospital Records, which includes youngster High Contrast, breakbeat chameleon Landslide and label co-founder Tony Colman's London Elektriccity project. On his second LE album, *Billion Dollar Gravy*, Colman ratchets up the energy and instrumentation—every song is catchy, hummable and satisfying, while remaining tough enough for dancefloor enthusiasts. Following a trying day in which music he penned for an advert had mysteriously become corrupted on his laptop just minutes before completion, Colman was able to take a deep breath and answer some rapid-fire studio queries. *Tomas A. Palermo*

**XLR8R: What are the various jobs you do at Hospital and as a musician?**

**London Elektriccity:** There's producing, playing live and DJing as London Elektriccity. Then there's the label hat, doing A&R with [former LE partner] Chris [Goss], the accounts and contracts.

**XLR8R: What computer do you take on the road?**

**LE:** I've got the smallest, lightest iBook, with a little 10" screen, which is fine for all my pre-production needs. I've got the fat Mac back in the studio. But I can work out all my ideas using Cubase or Reason on the iBook.

**XLR8R: Is your studio a part of the label/office complex?**

**LE:** It's underneath, in the basement. The studio itself was actually founded in 1975, before we moved in. It used to be where all the Stiff Recordings artists like Ian Dury, The Stranglers, and all the punk and pub rock bands used to record.

**XLR8R: What musicians did you collaborate with on the new album?**

**LE:** The only other instrumentalist on the album is the Jungle Drummer. I've been looking for a drummer like him for years. There's a lot of drummers who can play drum & bass, but he's the first person I've met who *lives* it. He's like a human "Amen."

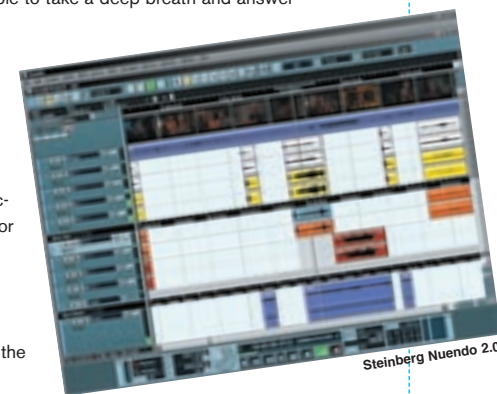
**XLR8R: What software do you sequence with?**

**LE:** I use quite a diverse range of software on the album, but the main two are Steinberg Nuendo and Propellerheads Reason. Nuendo is actually better than ProTools—it sounds amazing. But we still have a 56-channel mixing desk here as well, which I use when the tune needs that sound.

**XLR8R: Any tips for producers on post-production or mastering?**

**LE:** If the track's good and the arrangement's good, it actually doesn't matter what you do to it. But the way you master a tune is fairly well-documented—just don't overdo it. Don't be fooled into trying to make everything too loud, because you can actually squash it all. I do all the CD mastering using Nuendo, with the Waves plug-ins. But a great album will sound great unmastered.

[www.hospitalrecords.com](http://www.hospitalrecords.com)



Steinberg Nuendo 2.0

## ASK ROBOTSPeAK!

It's our new gear advice column, where you the reader ask the music technology experts at computer gear shop RobotSpeak questions. Got a query about your bedroom and studio production and DJ gear? Send it to: [tomas@xlr8r.com](mailto:tomas@xlr8r.com) with "Ask RobotSpeak" in the subject line, and your answer will appear in next issue.

**Dear RobotSpeak: How long does it take to learn the basics of electronic music production using Pro Tools? Are there any beginners courses offered on-line?**

*Sean O'Neil, Cork, Ireland*

Believe it or not, learning the basics of Digidesign's ProTools is about as easy as it gets. Since the early days of multitrack audio recording, Digi has made it a point to keep the ProTools interface as uncluttered and intuitive as possible. Its key-commands and editing tools have been thoughtfully laid out for the quickest and most efficient editing of multitrack audio. As great as ProTools is, however, it may not be the best choice for purely electronic music production. While ProTools' roots are in audio, Emagic's Logic, MOTU's Digital Performer, Steinberg's Cubase and Cakewalk's Sonar are all born of MIDI sequencing lineage, and at this point their MIDI editing capabilities exceed those in ProTools. A suggestion: Learn Propellerhead's Reason first. Reason is an entire hardware studio replicated in software. Nothing beats it for getting your head around analog synthesis, sampling, sequencing and signal flow. Propellerheads just released a tutorial CD-ROM aptly titled "Producing Music with Reason." It sells for under \$50.00. Get it.

**Dear Robot Speak: Is there any truth to the rumors that Logic Platinum will be "bundled" with new Macintosh computers? What's the difference between Platinum and older versions available for Macs?**

*Jeff Schall, Seattle, WA*

After conferring with a couple of Apple people who are in the know, it has been revealed that as of now there are no current plans to have a version of Logic bundled with the new Macs slated to be unveiled this spring. Perhaps Apple isn't quite ready to step on MOTU and Steinberg's toes, in favor of their newly adopted German stepchild. Typically, however, the versions of Logic that have been packaged with products like the M-Audio audio interfaces have been a version closer to the entry level Micro Logic. The current basic Emagic softsynth/Logic bundle, the Big Box, is a version very similar to what used to be called Logic Silver. This version is now called Logic Audio. The three Emagic packages—Logic Audio, Logic Audio Gold and Logic Audio Platinum—all differ in price and features. If one were to want to expand the basic features of the software contained in the Big Box, a good way to go would be to update the bundled softsynths to their full version, thus making all the features available for their maximum tweaking pleasure. Excellent software.

Check RobotSpeak's dope website at: [www.robotSpeak.com](http://www.robotSpeak.com)

## BIGGER THAN YOUR LIFE

Alphanumeric is coming at us with the latest in holding-lots-of-stuff-while-looking-cool technology. This backpack is equipped with enough compartments for a DJ looking to fit about 30 records and the rest of his at-home studio, while doubling as a gadget box for today's eclectic musician or artist. Wide enough and long enough, it lets you use your



imagination as to what to pack and where to stick it, especially since most of the smaller sections are enhanced with Velcro and therefore adjustable. One pocket is big enough to fit a laptop—do you put your laptop there or your art portfolio? How about both? Oh, they'd fit. Plus if you feel feisty enough one day to smash your laptop into smaller bits, there'd be more than enough compartments for each piece, including netted pockets to fit the smaller shards. And hell, if all other artistic endeavors fail, it makes a great caddy for a 12-pack and some sandwiches. *Julia Chan*  
[www.anumeric.com](http://www.anumeric.com)

>> WIDE ENOUGH AND LONG ENOUGH, IT LETS YOU USE YOUR IMAGINATION AS TO WHAT TO PACK AND WHERE TO STICK IT...

## SMALL AS MICE (ALMOST)

With a name like **Impulse 6**, how can these **Peavey studio two-way speakers** not kick ass? Well, just know that these small but punchy monitors are weather-resistant, equipped with a 5.25" woofer and a 1" soft-dome tweeter, and they come in white. Although at first glance this mini-me version of a full-grown speaker may not seem like it can handle you and your block-rockin' masterpiece, be forewarned that these babies can run up to 100 watts of frequency—perfect for studio monitoring or use in smaller spaces. And since they weigh in at a puny seven pounds, you can stack these monitors up on walls like a giant chessboard, or set them up outside so that the plants can enjoy your music too. *Julia Chan*

[www.peavey.com](http://www.peavey.com)



>> MAX/MSP FINDS FAVOR WITH ACADEMIC AND EXPERIMENTAL PERFORMERS AND ARTISTS BECAUSE OF WHAT IT CAN DO, NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

## MAXED OUT

Perhaps the most flexible and modifiable multimedia software available for the Macintosh (and recently available as a free upgrade for existing users of Mac's OSX) is the **Cycling 74's**

**Max/MSP/Jitter** suite of programs. This innovative San Francisco software company again provides the proactive user with a staggering amount of options for studio recording, creating interactive installations, or performing live. Literally hundreds of potential

objects—filters, effects, synthesizers, gates, mixers, signal generators—route, process and trigger events like MIDI data, audio or video samples, all interchangeable and controllable from nearly any possible interface.

You can use Quicktime files, or a ProTools Digi 001 platform; you can use Rewire with Reason, VST plug-ins, or even use Max/MSP as a VST plug-in. Most of all, you can map this in the sequence that your particular use demands—very impressive.

Sacrificing the eye candy screen shots of more commercially oriented software, Max/MSP finds favor with academic and experimental performers and artists because of what it can do, not what it looks like. Microsound and ambient producers like Tetsu Inoue, Carl Stone, Kim Cascone and Sarah Peebles have recently released recordings for Cycling '74, suggesting some of the myriad implementations.

The open-ended, modular design allows for easy adaptation, as the program excels at creating complex, parallel flow charts of incoming data (with very useful monitoring options, such as oscilloscope waveform displays) processing in near-realtime with very low latency. A generally open-source

community of users and programmers provide many helpful and common patches for Max/MSP, and a user usually can tweak these further as necessary. For those proficient in C, Max/MSP provides a way to write new audio-user interface and event-processing objects. Fairly intuitive, really, and the many examples allow for immediate use. Highly recommended for those with a penchant for tinkering with odd audio systems and creating their own stuff. *Rob Riddle*

**Max/MSP/Jitter bundle MSRP \$850; Max/MSP \$495**

[www.cycling74.com](http://www.cycling74.com)







## VIS-ED KOSTAS SEREMETIS

COLLECTIBLE PAINTER AND DESIGNER KOSTAS EXPLAINS HOW HE WENT FROM COMICS GEEK TO THE ART WORLD'S MAN OF STEEL.

TEXT JAMES FRIEDMAN

"I'd be embarrassed to have a friend like me," laughs Kostas Seremetis with a shrug of his shoulders and a quick glance around his carefully maintained studio in a desolate industrial stretch of Long Island City, Queens. Only half-joking, he surveys a room crowded with paintings, toys, clippings and originals from SSUR and Keith Haring as if taking stock of his career.

Without missing a beat, he recalls a favorite moment from *The Simpsons* where the overweight guy that runs the comic book shop comes face-to-face with his own mortality and sighs, "Oh! I've wasted my life."

"I watch a lot of cartoons and read a lot of comics and it's sort of like candy," Seremetis explains. "It tastes so good but it rots your teeth." Judging from his work, however, the time has been well spent. Over the past 11 years, Seremetis has established himself

among collectors and gallery patrons as well as the hipster/skate/graff scene that fetishizes everything from Alife and Supreme to Mo'Wax and obscure Nike kicks. His intensely graphic projects blend splashes of spray paint, screen prints and precise brushwork to create bold collages of comic book imagery juxtaposed against disparate images of cars and Karl Marx (a nod to fashion icon Vivienne Westwood). Despite an aesthetic kinship to letter-day pop art, graffiti and design-inspired work, Seremetis's output is less about hipster cred than it is a radical reinvention of comic art and narrative.

For all his self-effacing humor about the geekiness of a grown man collecting enough action figures to require a storage facility, Seremetis remains as fascinated by the youthful diversions of comics and car-

toons as he was as a kid growing up in Boston in the '70s. The drama of good versus evil, of heroes and villains, informs his creative vision completely. His paintings use very powerful symbols from a more innocent time in our lives in order to make provocative statements about the current state of the world.

Seremetis's most overtly political piece, the diptych "Beyond Good And Evil" from a recent show in Japan, remains in his studio, too precious to be sold. Its canvases depict Captain America in the throes of mortal combat, in one painting he fights the forces of totalitarianism represented by a Nazi soldier complete with a swastika, and in the other, our hero battles with Uncle Sam in a paroxysm of self-destructive nationalism and violence. While Seremetis is rarely so overt, he packs every canvass with subtle statements on the





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coercive nature of domination and the unintended consequences of power. He uses the bold contrasts of good and evil found in comic books, cartoons and a child's imagination to craft subtle commentaries on the complexity of adult reality.

Seremetis isn't surprised that his work has found such a strong foundation in the graffiti art scene, despite the fact that he's never been a writer and he prefers Danzig, the Cult and Public Image Limited to just about all hip-hop. He notes that although his work is vaunted by a group of collectors, dealers and even a few Hollywood celebrities, "there's a whole other crew that follows me through Supreme and Recon and Bathing Ape and whatnot, and [who] collect my stuff through that world. I'm a little more connected to that in a way, because that's my age group, really." This group of mostly young artists and hipsters has gravitated to Kostas's work not just for the bold imagery and graphic composition, but also for the renegade approach he's taken to his craft from the beginning.

More than just familiar, his characters are literally part of a shared cultural experience that cuts across boundaries of nationality, class and race. In that sense, Seremetis speaks a very similar DIY visual language to graffiti artists who have pioneered ways to transmit their culture outside the conventional outlets of galleries, or anything resembling an establishment. A convergent evolution seems to have brought Seremetis into this post-everything art scene alongside graffiti icons like Futura and Stash. It's an especially poignant process, in that our current cultural time resembles the dark, mixed-up moment in the late-'70s when hip-hop, punk, fashion and art came together in a creative counterattack to encroaching conservatism and war.

But the style-conscious underground has provided more than just a context and a community for Seremetis—it's also provided him with loads of work and an attentive audience. Getting to paint the Union store in LA and the Stussy shop in Japan exposed Seremetis to scores of sophisticated kids who immediately saw a piece of their own worldview in his work. As the years have passed, these same kids have followed his development and nurtured his status as an art-world celebrity of sorts. "Whether I'm making t-shirts or figures or any kind of product whatsoever, that stuff just builds and builds, and carries me further, and enables me to create other works," he explains. "I use these other projects as a vehicle."

While Seremetis speaks warmly of his early days running a little t-shirt company on the side, and laughs at the obscene prices his "hand-painted action figure" (a hyper-muscular re-imagining of the Incredible Hulk as a post-apocalyptic graf superhero) fetches on eBay, he remains a painter above all else. Not that he isn't proud of those projects. As if to prove the point, he tells a story about receiving a package in the mail from Ryan McGuinness containing a magazine for toy collectors from Hong Kong.

"There was this spread of every Incredible Hulk figure ever made all together, and I was looking over it thinking it was a really nice gift and all," he explains, a wry smile crawling across his face. "And there was my Hulk—I mean my hand-painted action figure—right in there in the mix on the page. How dope is that? Yeah I've been in *Rolling Stone*, but that was equally as cool for me."

For more information on Kostas, check [www.kostasystems.com/](http://www.kostasystems.com/)



In 1999, I was setting up a home studio for electronic music production, and spent a lot of time researching music equipment online. I was always one of only a few women participating in discussions about gear, and found these forums particularly uninviting—inappropriate jokes about girlfriends were hurled about with the same alacrity as tips on synthesizer programming. Also, coverage of women in music magazines didn't seem to keep pace with the growing numbers of women DJing in clubs and releasing records. If women were featured at all, it was usually as a token gesture: magazines showcased women DJs as the exception rather than the rule, and focused more on their appearance than their skills. And it was pretty commonplace for gear magazines to run those ads with, say, a bikini-clad woman selling a DAT machine.

It was in this environment that I started Pinknoises.com. Pinknoises launched in October 2000 with the help of a handful of other women DJs, writers and web artists who recognized a need to make some noise. The idea behind Pinknoises was (and remains) that there should be a space on the web where women can find and share technical information on music production without the hassle of lingering sexist stereotypes, and where fans can see the contributions of women to DJing and electronic music culture represented well.

I was inspired by riotgrrl politics, and wanted to ignite a similar network of feminist, activist energy in electronic music culture—an effort that's been paralleled by other projects like German producers Nic Endo and Hanin Elias's label DHR Fatal. Pinknoises was founded on the basic idea that because music is a form of political expression, providing women and girls with more resources for making music can fuel political empowerment.

Many people argue that projects that focus on women solidify gender stereotypes rather than dissolve them. Some feel that the electronic music community is politically enlightened enough so that feminist projects merely preach to the converted. But given the gender-based stereotyping and discrimination described in the recent *Spinsters* documentary on women DJs—for instance, the persisting cultural assumptions that women lack complex understanding of music technology, and the evidence of discrepancy in numbers and in pay between men and women DJs on tour—it's hard to comprehend some

peoples' insistence that feminism is a quaint and irrelevant ideological relic from the '70s.

Among women I talk with for Pinknoises, I often encounter what I'd call "gender fatigue"—an understandable reluctance to participate in women-focused projects because they've done one too many in the past, and hit a point where they don't want to deal anymore until the emphasis is surely on their work, without regard to gender. Most women (myself included) have also been burned by at least one "all-women" event or album that "went bad"—marred by a deceitful promoter or the sleazy marketing tactics of a label—and thus, are very careful to choose which projects they'll rally around in the future.

On the positive side, women DJs are not such a rare phenomenon anymore, and media coverage, to a certain degree, has caught up and recognized this. For better or worse, equipment manufacturers are identifying women as a growing segment of their market; ads increasingly showcase women DJs and producers as skilled practitioners. Online music resources have increased exponentially over the last few years: if you're setting up a home studio now, there are many more options for learning besides lurking in newsgroups—lots of free software to download and online tutorials to help. And importantly, several resources for women have sprouted on the web and in the community, like SisterSF, female:pressure, SheJay and Electric W.O.M.B. These projects complement each other well, and with Pinknoises, form a substantial global network of women in electronic music. Ladyfest events have taken root far and wide, showing that feminist musical expressions take on many forms, including DJing and electronic music genres.

But much work remains to be done. In the ever-increasing stable of books on electronic music history, the contributions of women DJs and producers are consistently omitted or referenced only in a footnote, dismissed as marginal or "outside the scope" of the author's research. The interviews with nearly 30 artists on Pinknoises and the experiences of the hundreds of women DJs represented in the female:pressure database, for instance, tell an entirely different story—one that is far from marginal, and vibrant in its cultural and musical diversity. Until the historical frame becomes more inclusive, women-focused projects will continue to make noise.

For more go to [www.pinknoises.com](http://www.pinknoises.com).

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